

THE DAILY COURSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

SELF-EXAMINATION, REFLECTION, PRAYER AND
PRAISE, FOR THE YEAR ROUND

By all means use sometimes to be alone !—
Salute thyself ! See what thy soul doth wear !

Herbert.

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1900

PREFACE.

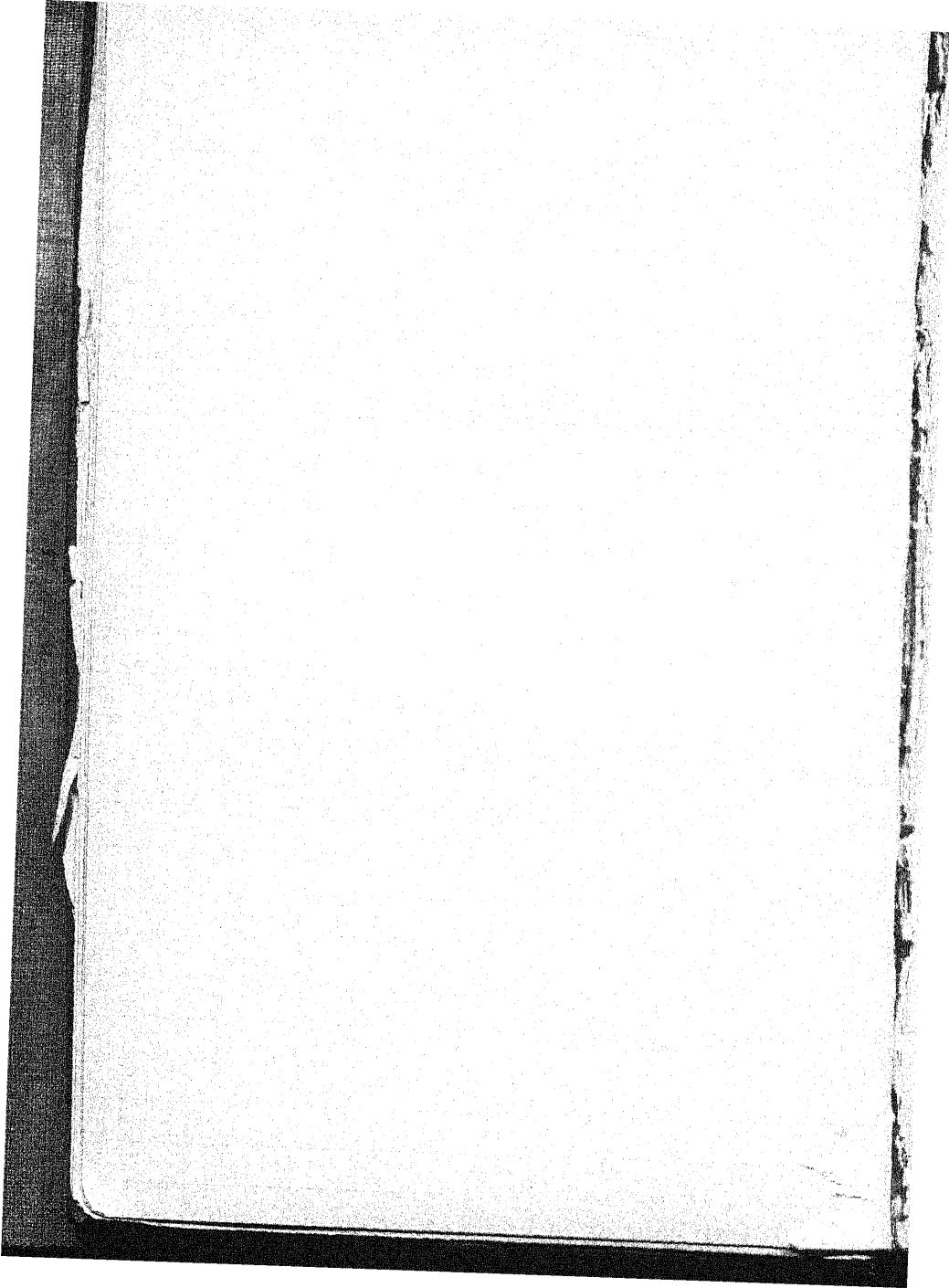
“THE DAILY COURSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE” is not Doctrinal, Controversial, or Denominational. It is CHRISTIAN. That is, its aim is the conservation, development, and edification of the life of Christ in the soul of the believer.

Each page consists of a question for self-examination ; text, of Scripture appropriate to the question ; reflections on the question and texts combined ; a brief prayer ; a verse of poetry.

The peculiarity of THE DAILY COURSE is in the *question*, chiefly. This makes it *unique* among the class of books to which it belongs. The author knows of no other volume of devotion with this particular feature.

At the end of each month there are four pages for *Memoranda*, which the thoughtful reader will find useful in sundry ways.

THE DAILY COURSE is dedicated to all Believers in the Lord Jesus, with the hope and prayer that it may answer in them who use it, the end for which it is published.



January 1st.

ON this, the first day of a new year, what are my reflections, what is my prayer, and what is my resolve?—

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God has led thee . . . in the wilderness.—Deut. viii. 2.

Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.—1 Sam. vii. 12.

Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.—Acts xxvi. 22.

Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.—Deut. xvii. 16.

Ye have not passed this way heretofore.—Jos. iii. 4.

I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.—Ps. cxvi. 9.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—Ps. xc. 12.

HOW usual it is for one who has taken any part in a public performance to recall wherein, according to his own judgment, he has failed; and how, if he had another opportunity, he would, at least, try to do better. Am I thus looking into the past year, calling to mind how in this, that, and the other, I have failed in my part in life before God and man? Am I saying to myself, "Ah! if I could live last year over again, would I not try to be and to do better in the things wherein I have come short?" Alas, however much I might wish this, it cannot be! I shall no more return that way. But a new year is just dawning upon me, in which, if I am wiser and stronger through past failures, I may, in fuller light, in deeper experience, in nobler courage, and in larger measures of Divine grace, do better for Christ and humanity than I have done in the past year. As each day brings me nearer my last day, should I not become wiser and holier, more prepared for that life which is only measured by eternity?

Let me then cease to mourn over the dead past, and set about to improve the *present*, and go forth to meet the shadowy future with a re-invigorated faith and newly-inspired prayers! I know not what a day will bring forth. It is well and wisely ordered that I should not. Whatever come or go—success or failure, victory or defeat—if God abide with me, that will suffice. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only."

HOPEFULLY, hopefully,
Onward I go,
Cheerfully, cheerfully,
Meet I the foe.
Crowns are awaiting us,
Glory prepared for us,
Joys overflow.

January 2nd.

WHAT ought to be the chief work of my spiritual life during the ensuing year?—

Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.—2 Peter, i. 5-7.

HOURS, days, months, and years, added together, make the sum total of our earthly existence. The works of men are accomplished on the same principle of addition. Thus a house is built, an engine constructed, a painting executed, and learning acquired. Beginning, progress, perfection, are the infallible order in Christian life and work. Am I a "babe in Christ," then it is for me to grow in Him until I come "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Am I a learner in the school of Christ? Then it is for me to begin with the first principles of the oracles of God, and "go on unto perfection." As one who has a work given him to do, I must "work out my salvation," and "work while it is day." As one entrusted with the formation of his own character, I must begin with the foundation of faith in Jesus; and beside this, add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, &c., until love, the "bond of perfectness," complete the whole. If I stop in my work before it is *finished*, shall I not lose my reward?

Thus my Christian life and work should be attended to this year. If every day, or even every month, I can, by adding only one virtue, displace a vice, I shall do something which will advance my spiritual progress. Next year, this time, if in life, shall I not be so much nearer perfection in Christ?

Divine Lord! give me wisdom, strength, and a willing mind to go on in this blessed work, quietly but surely every day I live. So shall I make my "calling and election sure," and "never fall," but, at the last, have "ministered unto me an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

THEN be it so!
For in better things we yet may grow;
Onward and upward still our way,
With the joy of progress from day to day;
Nearer and nearer every year
To the visions and hopes most true and dear!
Children still of a Father's love,
Children still of a home above.

January 3rd.

WHAT influence are the mercies of God as received in the past year, and as enjoyed at the present moment, having upon me?—

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.—Ps. ciii. 1, 2.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord.—Ps. cxvi. 12-14.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

WE have bad memories for remembering benefits. We have need to recall them. Ingratitude is often the fruit of forgetfulness. He who deserves *nothing* ought certainly to be thankful to Him who gives him what he *has*. It is a little thing to thank a donor for great things. A brute sometimes shows more gratitude to his master than his master to his God. A farmer one morning went to church and heard the words read, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." The conviction came to him of his own unthankfulness to the Divine Giver of all good. He went home, and entering the farmyard, a favourite cow came forward and licked his hand. Strong man as he was, the tears rushed to his eyes as he thought, "Why, that's it! That poor creature knows me, and is grateful to me, and yet I have never thought of my God, nor been grateful to Him for all He has done for me."

I cannot possibly remember *all* the blessings of the Lord bestowed upon me, any more than I can count all the rays of light that have shone on me since I was born, or all the pulsations of my heart since I first had life; but shall I *forget* them *all*? Surely there are some, both in providence and grace, which I never *can* or *will* forget. For these, and for all which memory fails to recall, I will bless the Lord at all times, and His praise shall be continually in my mouth.

O LORD of heaven, and earth, and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be!
How shall we show our love to Thee—
Giver of all?
For peaceful homes and healthful days,
For all the blessings earth displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness and praise,
Giver of all.

January 4th.

IN view of the uncertainties of the future, what is my present state of mind?—

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.—Phil. iv. 6, 7.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.—Isa. xxvi. 3.

Take therefore no (anxious) thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—Matt. vi. 34.

IF we know so little of to-day, we must not wonder that we know nothing of to-morrow. It is by wisely and unselfishly making the best of the present that the future comes to us with the fruits of the present in its hands. The evil of to-day borne nobly prepares us for the evils to-morrow may bring. One day with its burdens is quite sufficient at once, without being anxious about what may never occur. The wise mariner, sailing over dangerous seas which he has not crossed before, keeps specially calm and self-collected. Were he anxious and perturbed about the uncertainties before him, he might misread his compass and chart, and wreck his vessel ere he was aware. Thus a Christian must keep his mind in peace, trusting in God, and living by His word. Then, whatever come, he will be found prepared to receive it in the spirit of meekness and resignation.

As I go into the dark future with all its contingencies I will endeavour to go calmly and wakefully. I will take heed to my ways, look well before me, and mark all the *signals* as they appear. The white one, safety, I will trust; the green one, caution, I must not ignore; and the red one, danger, I must not pass, but wait until it is changed into caution or safety. Be Thou my guide, O Lord, and I will not fear to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

WE ask Thy peace, O Lord, through storm, and fear, and strife,
To light and guide us on through a long struggling life:
While no success or gain shall cheer the desperate fight,
Or nerve what the world calls our wasted night,—
Yet pressing through the darkness to the light.

Grant me Thy peace throughout my earthly life,
My balm in sorrow and my stay in strife!
Then when Thy voice shall bid my conflict cease,
Call me, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

January 5th.

HAVE I any secret besetting sin? What am I doing with it?—

Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a crowd of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—
Heb. xii. 1.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.—
2 Tim. ii. 4, 5.

ALAS! Who has not his secret besetting sin, which, like an internal disease of the body or a worm at the root of a plant, may be eating away the vitals of his divine life? This sin is for each Christian to deal with for himself, as no one else may know anything about it. He should deal with it promptly, firmly, asking special help from God. If he connive at it, or hesitate, or aim at its destruction in his own strength, it will be too much for him. He may hush it to sleep, but it will awake again. He may stun it, but it will recover, and come upon him in renewed force. Nothing but its *death* must suffice; and what can kill sin save the grace of God given to him in whom it reigns?

How is it with me? Have I any such sin? If so, do I curb it, restrain it, crush it, or do I let it take its course? If I let it alone, it will grow stronger and stronger, until it is my ruin; if I undertake its destruction, that will cost me many a struggle. Which shall it be, a striving as unto blood and victory, or a let-alone course and everlasting separation from the good and the pure? Shall I, for the sake of a transient indulgence, sacrifice the hope of eternal life in heaven? God forbid!

O Thou, Who art the strength of the weak, arm me for the *struggle*. Bear up my mind in its resolution, at any cost, to break off the sin in righteousness. Undertake for me, and in Thee shall I conquer and glory. Amen.

WHAT is it keeps me back,
From which I cannot part,
Which will not let the Saviour take
Possession of my heart?
Some cursed thing unknown
Must surely lurk within;
Some idol which I will not own,
Some secret bosom sin.

IN view of the difficulties of living a holy life and seeking the "better country, that is, a heavenly," what should be my spirit and conduct?—

LOOKING UNTO JESUS, the Author and Finisher of faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. xii. 2, 3.

In your patience possess ye your souls.—Luke xxi. 19.

Ye have need of patience.—Heb. x. 36.

Let patience have her perfect work.—James i. 4.

Walk with all lowliness and meekness.—Eph. iv. 2.

Be gentle, showing all meekness to all men.—Titus iii. 2.

A TRAVELLER, who contemplates passing through (to him) unexplored regions, or climbing mountains he has not yet climbed, expects dangers and difficulties. In view of them he provides himself with an intelligent guide, and with such equipments as he thinks will be necessary to meet all contingencies.

Thus the Christian, expecting to encounter difficulties as he journeys to the "land of uprightness" and the "rest of God," takes to himself the whole "armour of light," and engages the "Leader of faithful souls and Guide" to accompany him until he reach the "wealthy place." May this be *my* armour with which I shall face the difficulties that shall meet me on my way to the Father's House on high. There is none like it—faith to meet unbelief, patience to meet trials, hope to meet dejection, meekness to meet provocation, truth to meet error, righteousness to meet iniquity, looking unto Jesus as my Captain, Example, Friend, and Brother. As He Who overcame all things, sat down on His Father's throne, so may I, in His strength, do the same, and sit down with Him on His throne.

Then will my sorrows have an end. Then will all conflicts be over, all enemies vanquished, all dangers escaped, all sin cleansed away. Then shall I reign in purity, shine in glory, and live for ever in the joy of my Lord! Blessed anticipation!

In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be confounded!

BE Thou my Guardian and my Guide,
And hear me when I call!
Let not my slippery footsteps slide,
And hold me lest I fall.

January 7th.

IS it my aim and endeavour always TO BE ACCEPTED OF GOD?—

Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.—2 Cor. v. 9.

In all things approving ourselves . . . of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses . . . by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown, and yet well known ; as dying, and, behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.—2 Cor. vi. 4-10.

IT is said that Luther was a man of one idea, which chiefly influenced him in all his life, viz., JESUS. So every man, if he will take the pains to look within, will discover that there is *one aim* which, above all others, moves him in his life's course. So it is with the Christian. He has one predominating motive and end, which is, *that he may be well-pleasing to God and accepted of Him*. This realized, life to him is worth living, and the end of life is blessedly attained. This *not* realized, life is *a melancholy failure*. May it be mine, through God's grace, to live with the sweet assurance that I am "accepted in the Beloved"! To have this assurance I must, like Enoch, "walk with God," in the light of His countenance, in the fellowship of His Spirit, in willing service in His cause, in aiming to be perfect as He is perfect.

As a Christian, may my one prevailing idea be JESUS. Still more, may Jesus *Himself* be in me, my Life, my Hope, my Joy, my Peace—my All in all. May He reign in me, the King of Righteousness and Truth, bringing my whole being into conformity to His will! May I always have the testimony of His Spirit that I please Him!

If Thou, O Father, shalt see Jesus in me, Thou canst not but accept me! I shall then live in sweet serenity under the smiles of Thy love, and in the encircling arms of Thy protecting care!

LIFE without a plan,
As useless as the moment it began,
Serves merely as a soil for discontent
To thrive in ; an encumbrance ere half spent.

January 8th.

DO I, as a Christian, ever examine myself in heart and life?—

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates.—2 Cor. xiii. 5.

I commune with my own heart ; and my spirit made diligent search.—Ps. lxxvii. 6.

If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.—1 John iii. 21.

I FEAR this duty is seldom attended to by me ; and when it is, in an off-hand way which results in little good. Who or what should I know if not myself ? Yet I seek other knowledge rather than this. If in my trade I cannot distinguish things that differ without examining them, how can I know whether I am a real or a nominal Christian if I do not examine myself ?

“To examine ourselves,” says Matthew Henry, “is to discourse with our own hearts ; to converse with ourselves ; a very rational, needful, and improving piece of conversation. When we go about this work, we must retire from the world, sit alone and keep silence ; we must retire into our own bosoms and consider ourselves, reflect upon ourselves, inquire concerning ourselves, enter into a solemn conference with our own souls, and be anxious concerning their state. We must examine ourselves as metal is examined, whether it be right or counterfeit ; as a copy is examined by the original ; as a candidate who stands for preferment.”

The tradesman who never examines his books must not be surprised if he gets into a *muddle*. A wife that looks not “well to her household” may expect things to get into confusion. So the Christian who neglects self-examination must not be surprised to find his spiritual life become a medley of doubts and fears, of difficulties and dangers. May I, like a wise sea captain, look to my compass and chart, to see where I am and how to steer my course, that I may safely come to the “desired haven !”

O, Thou Searcher of hearts and Trier of reins, do Thou graciously help me in this work of self-examination !

SUM up at night what thou hast done by day,
And, in the morning, what thou hast to do ;
Dress and undress thy soul. Mark the decay
And growth of it. If, with thy watch, that too
Be down, then wind up both. Since we shall be
Most surely judged, make thy accounts agree.

January 9th.

IN affliction of any kind do I, in a cheerful spirit, consider its beneficent design as appointed or permitted by God?—

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 Cor. iv. 17.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down.—Heb. xii. 11, 12.

IF the wheat was sensitive as man and could speak, it would say that it did not like being thrust between the mill stones to be ground into flour. If the marble could speak, it would say how trying it was to be cut and chiselled by the sculptor. If the iron could speak, it would complain that it should be put in the fire and hammered in the way it was by the blacksmith; but everyone looking on would see how in each case its own good, as well as the good of others, was being realised.

Thus it is with regard to the afflictions with which I am visited. If I repined I should be only as others, but as a Christian, taught by Christ in precept and example, I must bow in graceful submission. "It is *hard* to be afflicted thus," says the natural man. "It is *good* for me to be afflicted," says the spiritual man. I must consider the *end* of the Lord's visitations. If the bitter is meant to yield sweetness, if the shame is designed to work out glory, if when the fire has spent itself purity shall ensue, if when the wants and woes of the wilderness are past I shall enter the land flowing with milk and honey, I must endure all joyfully, and thank Him who has so ordered that my afflictions shall result in such blessed compensations.

With such designs in my afflictions, if I cannot be *joyful*, I may be *patient*. I may wait the Lord's time. When He has tried me He will bring me forth as gold purified. It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good. It is not for me to dictate to Him. I must leave myself in His hands, as in the hands of a Father "too wise to err and too good to be unkind."

Merciful God! if Thou abide with me, in every trouble I shall have peace, and in every sorrow joy!

O LORD, my God, do Thou Thy holy Will;
I will lie still!
I will not stir lest I forsake Thine arm,
And break the charm,
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest.

January 10th.

AM I not too often lulled to sleep by worldly pleasures and fleshly indulgences, which rob me of my strength and make me weak like other men?—

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.—Matt. xxiv. 12.

Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.—2 Tim iv. 10.

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.—Ps. lii. 7.

She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.—1 Tim. v. 6.

Go not in the way of evil men.—Prov. iv. 14.

WHAT is esteemed the strongest often turns out to be the weakest, and on the contrary. Proof of strength is in the *testing*. The weakest part of anything is the measure of its strength. So far as it endures the strain, so far it is strong, and no further. Then, again, a thing may be able to stand one test and not another. There were many wonderful things that Samson could do, but he could not withstand the force of *Delilah's* influence. Alas! the strongest physically and intellectually are often the weakest morally.

Whatever weakness I may have in my body or in my mind, I desire to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," so that no temptation in life shall overcome me. Of what use is it to have the name and dress of a soldier if I am a coward in the conflict? I had better be a piece of ordinary wrought iron and stand a severe testing, than a reed enamelled with gold and yield to pressure. Joseph was stronger before his tempter than Samson before his. One is a type of the good man of the world, the other of one that loves God "and keeps His commandments." May I always in the presence of temptation, like Joseph, say, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" May I resist the devil, and he will flee from me. As my Lord Himself, may I use the "sword of the Spirit" in my resistance, so shall the enemy leave me on the field more than conqueror.

O God, make me mighty in Thy might to resist every evil as it may assail me!

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,
Like some broad river rushing down alone!
Mine be the power which ever to its sway
Will win the wise at once—and, by degrees,
May into uncongenial spirits flow.

January 11th.

THOUGH *Nature around is sterile under the influence of her own laws, is my soul fruitful under the genial influences of the Spirit of Grace?—*

For if these things be in you (*see three previous verses*) and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 Peter i. 8.

We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.—Col. i. 9, 10.

THE laws of the natural and of the spiritual world do not fit into each other like the cogs of two wheels and necessarily work together in their operations. There may be sterility and dearth in the kingdom of nature, while in the kingdom of grace there may be life and fruitfulness. There should be in every Christian a perpetual season of brightness, pleasantness, and fruit-bearing, to the glory of God. The "Sun of Righteousness" never sets, the dew of heaven is always falling, the influences of the Spirit are ever present. There is, then, no reason why a Christian should not live constantly in a summer of happiness, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God.

I would this were so with me. Because the sun is in its winter solstice, the nights long and days short, temperature down to freezing, deep snows, hard frosts, leafless and fruitless trees, and no singing of birds, it need not follow that my soul should be in a corresponding state. Certainly not. There is no reason why it should. In religion I should not be dependent on atmospheric changes and states of weather. The laws of the spiritual world in which I live are always the same. It is for me to strive by divine grace to conform myself to them, and so live on the "Delectable Hills" or in the "land of Beulah" all the year round. O happy life! O happy state!

Blessed Lord of Life, suffer not the coldness, the dearth of spiritual winter, in my soul. By Thy ever-indwelling Spirit, make me always fruitful in every good word and work.

O LET Thy Holy Spirit's light,
And Thine own heavenly radiance, bright,
O'erflow my spirit like a flood,
Eternal Source of every good!
Then shall I tell in grateful song
The praises that to Thee belong,
And while I live my joy shall be
To consecrate myself to Thee.

January 12th.

THOUGH God can do marvels beyond my conception, yet do I know there is one thing He cannot do, viz., "*deny Himself.*"—

God is not man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it; or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?—Num. xxiii. 19.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.—Heb. vi. 18.

God that cannot lie.—Titus i. 2.

WHAT calming and strengthening influence it inspires in one's mind to *feel* unlimited confidence in one on whom one depends for the very well-being of himself and his family! "As certain as he exists he cannot lie or falsify his word; I have unbounded trust in his fidelity." What words to say of any man! Yet this man *may* fail, because his *power* fails from causes over which he has no control. But my God *cannot* fail in power, and *will not* in fidelity. He has "magnified His word above all His name." That is to say, He gives His word as His bond more than His name, and I may rely on that as on His very existence. HE SAYS so; that is enough. I have met with something similar to this in social or in business life. I have heard it said of some one known to be a true man, "His word is sufficient; I want no document with HIS NAME attached: I will take his word for anything."

How much more may I speak thus of my God? His "faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." It is "established in the heavens." "He will not suffer His faithfulness to fail." His "faithfulness and mercy shall be with His people." His "faithfulness is unto all generations." "Faithfulness is the girdle of His loins." "His commands of old are faithfulness and truth." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away." What more can I need to assure me of the fidelity of God? With His *word*, and with my *CONFIDENCE* in it, I will live in peace, assured that He will in all things "do as He has said." Sweet peace! Ennobling assurance! "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Thou Faithful, Loving God, I will take Thy word as it is, and stay my soul upon it in calm repose, amid all the changings of men and things!

ENGRAVED as in eternal brass, The mighty promise shines;
Nor can the powers of darkness rase Those everlasting lines.
His every word of grace is strong As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along Speaks all the promises.

January 13th.

AM I, and all I have, freely and entirely consecrated to Christ, and do I live in the spirit of this consecration?—

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

Yield yourselves unto God.—Rom. vi. 13.

Ye are not your own . . . therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

WHEN the people of Collatia were negotiating an unconditional capitulation to the Romans, Egerius, on the part of the Romans, inquired of the ambassadors, "Are the people of Collatia in their own power?" When an affirmative answer was given, it was next inquired, "Do you deliver up yourselves, the people of Collatia, your city, your fields, your waters, your boundaries, your temples, your utensils, all your property, divine and human, into my power and the power of the Roman people?" "We surrender all," was the reply. "And so," said he, "I accept you."

My God has endowed me with the gift of free agency to use in the kingdom of His righteousness and peace; but, alas, I have abused that gift in living to myself, in serving the world and sin. I desire henceforth to serve the Lord. I use this power that I have and come to Him and surrender myself into His hands. In doing this I offer also everything I have. What less can I or dare I offer to Him Who gave Himself to death for my salvation, and gives Himself to me as my Saviour? My *all* consecrated to Him is indeed as nothing compared with Himself given to me. In receiving Him I find myself and all I surrendered included, sanctified and made meet for His exalted service.

In this consecration, I recover the liberty, the purity, the happiness I lost through sin. I am the Lord's and He is mine! We two are one. Blessed be His Name!

O Thou Heavenly King, use me to fulfil Thy will in any way Thou chooseth! To be Thine and to serve at Thy command will be joy beyond all joys and an honour equal to the angels' that do Thy pleasure.

I N glad and full surrender I give myself to Thee,
Thine utterly and only, and evermore to be!
O Son of God, Who lovest me, I will be Thine alone,
And all I am and all I have shall henceforth be Thine own.

January 14th.

DOES fear of ridicule or contempt from irreligious acquaintances or friends, the fear of being thought methodistical or puritanical, keep me from following Christ fully?—

Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.—Luke xiv. 33.

I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—Phil. iii. 7.

No man spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.—John vii. 13.

Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews.—John xii. 38.

As concerning this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against.—Acts xxviii. 22.

IN things of this life men are not afraid of a little ridicule when their personal or business interests are concerned. But as regards Christ and His religion, they carefully seek to avoid it; as though in one case it were a disgrace, and in the other an honour. How perversely does human nature see the things of God and the things of time and sense!

As I look into the world around, I see no man kept back from his pursuit of gain by contempt or ridicule. I see men rushing after pleasure, riches, power, regardless of what is said about them. I see men wild with enthusiasm to pay their honours to royalty, yea, to a fellow-townsmen who has been elected to a place in Parliament or in a town council. Shall I, then, shrink from reproach, ridicule, or even contempt, in my enthusiasm to follow Christ, the King of Goodness, Truth, and Love? Let the stones cry out against me if I do. But let not my following of Him be more in show than in reality; more among the multitude, when the welkin rings with their turbulent "Hosannas," than in the quiet and retirement of life. I do not wish to follow Him one day with asseverations that I would rather die than forsake Him, and the next day, because surroundings are changed, swear on oath that I never knew Him! Rather may I not follow Him at all than thus degrade myself and dishonour my Lord.

Through evil report and good report I desire, as best I can, to follow Thee, my Saviour, whithersoever Thou goest! "Draw me, and I will run after Thee."

○ WHAT, if we be Christ's, is earthly shame and loss?

Bright shall the crown of glory be when we have borne the cross.

Enough, if Thou at last the word of blessing give,

And let us rest beneath Thy feet, where saints and angels live.

January 15th.

DO I enjoy the abiding presence of Jesus as my Light and Salvation?—

The Lord is my Light and my Salvation.—Ps. xxvii. 1.

I am the Light of the World. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.—John viii. 12.

Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.—Mal. iv. 2.

The Lord God is a Sun.—Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

LIGHT is good, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. But sunshine is more than light. It is warmth, joy, and inspiration. There is light, when heavy clouds cover the sun, yea, when the black clouds of a tempest hide it from view. But the *cloudless* sunshine is the glory of the heaven, and the heaven of the earth.

May my religion be the cloudless sunshine of Jesu's grace in my heart and life. I shall then know what the joy of the Lord is, and somewhat understand how it is the saints above are fully and always happy in seeing His face.

A Christian lady, visiting among the poor, called on a sick girl. Her home was a dreary-looking one. The room she occupied was on the north side of the house. There was nothing bright or pleasant about it. Everything looked dark and cheerless.

"I am sorry you have no sun on this side of the house," said the lady. "Not a ray of sunshine gets in here. This is a misfortune, for sunshine is everything."

"Oh, ma'am! you are mistaken," said the sick girl, as a sweet smile lighted up her pale face. "My sun pours in at every window and through all the cracks."

"But how can the sun get round on this side of the house?" asked the visitor.

"It is Jesus, 'the Sun of Righteousness,' that shines in here," was the reply, "and *He makes the best sunshine.*"

Thou Eternal, Ever-Cloudless, Ever-Infinite Light, flood my soul as my soul can bear. Grant that in the darkest days and nights I may bask in Thy rays and rejoice in Thy salvation!

LIVE in the light; so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love
The Spirit only can bestow,
Who reigns in light above.
Live in the light; and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His,
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,
In Whom no darkness is.

WHAT do I take to be the HEART of the Christian religion ?—

God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—Gal. vi. 14.

I am crucified with Christ . . . Who loved me and gave Himself for me.—Gal. ii. 20.

Who gave Himself a ransom for all.—1 Tim. ii. 6.

He gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.—Gal. i. 4.

Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—1 Tim. ii. 14.

He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.—2 Cor. v. 15.

THE heart is considered the seat of life in the body ; its principle of motion, heat, and activity ; from it the blood goes to and fro to the extreme parts. It sustains man in his powers and faculties ; it enables the brain to think, and, if it is touched, man dies.

In a similar way, the truth of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice is the vital force of Christianity, and the life-giving principle to the Christian's life. Without this, Christianity is no better than any other religion, nor the Christian any better than other men. There is nothing in heaven or earth that can take its place.

I may believe in all the other revealed verities of Christian faith, but my belief in these affords no life-giving or life-sustaining power to my affections, to my inner self. They may have an intellectual or even a moral effect upon me, but I remain dead to a life that is divine and heavenly.

On the other hand, if my faith takes the death of Christ in all its meritorious significance, and rests on it as my only hope and plea for salvation, I feel its life-force flowing into my dead soul, and "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Now I see the glory of the Cross, or rather the glory of the death of the Crucified. Now I see how His divinity, His manhood, and His entirety of being converge here to give to His death that which is my life and "the life of the world."

A cold, activeless, joyless religion is that which has not the great Atonement of the Cross as its *heart*. From such a religion, "Good Lord, deliver me."

AND is there who the blessed Cross wipes off,
As a foul blot from his dishonoured brow ?
If angels tremble ;—'tis at such a sight.

January 17th.

DO I believe in God as able to give me the *GREATEST* good I need as easily as the *SMALLEST*?—

Is anything too hard for the Lord?—Gen. xviii. 14.

There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or few.—1 Sam. xiv. 6.

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.—1 John iv. 3.

He is able to subdue all things to Himself.—Phil. iii. 21.

The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect."—Gen. xvii. 1.

With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles.—2 Chron. xxxii. 8.

AS in nature we see the power of God equal to the clothing of a lily or the guidance of a world, to the supply of an insect's wants or to filling the earth with good things for all living creatures; so in the spiritual world His power, while it can do "exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think," responds to the cries and needs of "babes and sucklings."

Henry Martyn asks, "Who is it that maketh my comforts to be a source of enjoyment? Cannot the same Hand make cold and hunger and nakedness and peril to be a train of ministering angels, conducting me to glory?"

On a certain occasion, during a rebellion in Scotland, Colonel Gardiner was saying in the presence of the Rev. E. Erskine and others, what he could do in opposing the foe, if he had a certain regiment at his command which he once had instead of the one which was disheartened. Mr. Erskine gently tapped him on the shoulder and whispered in his ear, "Colonel, say *under God*." The Colonel, a good man, instantly added, "O yes, Mr. Erskine, I mean that; and having God for our General we must be conquerors."

Environed with that power, I may venture into the thickest battles of life, or walk through its most perilous dangers, or experience its most pressing hardships, and fear no evil. Its rod and its staff will comfort me.

Gracious Father, give me to feel every moment that Thy arm of omnipotence, as I rest upon it, will never bend nor break!

YES, Thou art ever present, Power Divine!
Not circumscribed by time, nor fixed to space,
Confined to altars, nor to temple bound.
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
In dungeons, or on thrones, the faithful find Thee.

WHAT is the pre-eminent knowledge that I should desire and follow after as a Christian?—

Grow in . . . the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—

1 Peter.

That I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection.—Phil. iii. 10.

To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.—Eph. iii. 19.

This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.—John xvii. 3.

WHETHER there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," that is, knowledge merely intellectual. But knowledge of Jesus, as Jesus dwells in the heart of a true believer, shall never vanish away, any more than love itself. I remember once visiting an aged Christian in his dying illness. I asked him several questions as to his wife and family, of whom he seemed to know nothing. I asked him if he knew me; his answer was in the negative, though he had seen me often before. I then asked him, "Do you know Jesus?" The old disciple lifted his head, with a smile on his face, and replied with emphasis, "*O yes, I know Jesus, and love Him!*"

How exceedingly beautiful and sublime that knowledge, which thus survives the wreck of memory and the decrepitude of years! While one that has been in his day an intellectual giant may in old age become imbecile and lose the acquisitions of more than a half-century's studious pursuits, and die with a mind as blank as an infant's, he, who in life has grown in the knowledge and love of Jesus, is in his memory of Him as vigorous and happy as when he first saw the Lord. This knowledge makes his face to shine in the darkness of death.

It was this knowledge and love of Jesus that made Miss Havergal so beautifully happy in her dying hour:—"Oh, it is the Lord Jesus that is so dear to me, I can't tell how precious! how much He has been to me!" "Oh, I want all of you to speak *bright*, BRIGHT words about Jesus; oh do, do! It is all perfect peace, I am only waiting for Jesus to take me in."

May I, in my last moments, as now, "know Whom I have believed!"

JESUS, of Thee shall be my song;
To Thee my heart and soul belong;
All that I have and am is Thine,
And Thou, blest Saviour, Thou art mine!
Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore,
Oh, make me love Thee more and more.

January 19th.

AM I as diligent to lay up treasures in heaven as I am to lay up treasures on earth?—

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—Matt. vi. 19-21.

"**B**Y treasures here," says Trapp, "are meant worldly wealth in abundance, precious things stored up, as silver, gold, pearls, &c. All these are but earth, and it is but upon earth they are laid up. What is silver and gold but white and yellow earth? And what are pearls and precious stones but the *garbage of the earth?*"

He who lays up treasures on earth to the neglect of laying up treasures in heaven acts as though he thought time longer than eternity, earth more secure than heaven, and his store here more valuable than the glory that is to be revealed. He is like one who should treasure up refuse of every kind and throw away precious jewels and valuable works of art. He is like a man who should lay by his money in open places and not secure it under lock and key.

He who lays up in heaven the treasures of a holy life is like a man, who, before he goes into a new country, sends his fortune ahead of him, or like a man of business, who sends his takings of the day to the bank for safe keeping. Treasures of earth, when gained honestly, and used in ways of beneficence and charity, when with them we "make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," may become the means of securing treasures in heaven.

A lady was once visiting at the house of a minister, who had two sons; these two little boys were amusing themselves with some beautiful toys. The lady, on seeing them, said, "Well, boys, are these your treasures?" "No, ma'am," said the elder boy, "these are not our *treasures*; these are our *play-things*. *Our treasures are in heaven.*"

Grant me grace, O Lord, to lay up in "store a good foundation against the time to come, that I may lay hold of eternal life."

ALL my treasures are above,
All my riches is Thy love;
Who the worth of love can tell?
Infinite, unsearchable!

January 20th.

HAVE I learned the art of enjoying the blessings of this life with which God has favoured me, without being so engrossed with them as to quench the aspiration of my soul after communion with Him?—

Use this world, as not abusing it.—1 Cor. vii. 31.

Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.—1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.—Rom. xiv. 14.

HOW to hold and use the things of this life so as not to affect our heavenly pursuits and our longings after God is a lesson which it may take long practice, much self-control, and great discipline of God's Providence and His Spirit, to teach. But such a lesson is worth learning even in such a way. "I have leaned towards my comforts," says the Rev. R. Cecil, "without finding them give way. A sharp warning has met me that these are aliens; and as an alien live thou among them. We may take up the pitcher *to drink*, but the moment we begin *to admire it*, God in love to us will dash it to pieces."

"I love my child dearly," said a mother to me, "but I must not love her more than I love the Saviour, or I shall have her taken from me."

If I have riches, and glory in them more than in the Cross, what wonder if God give them wings to fly away? If I have friends and trust in them more than in the Lord, will they not fail me when I most need them?

Help me, O God, that I may place my affections on nothing instead of *Thyself*. Thou hast given me *Thyself* in nature to supply my temporal needs; and in Jesus, to save me from my sins; should I not then enjoy Thee in the blessings, and not the blessings without Thee?

ALL creatures have their joy;
Yet, if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter than at present is.
Not that he may not here
Take of the cheer;
But as birds drink and straight lift up their head,
So he must sip and think
Of better drink
He may attain to after he is dead.

January 21st.

IS it true that I can see God in all things in nature, but not see Him in myself?—

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

—Ps. xix. 1-3.

The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.—Ps. xxxv. 3.

Without God in the world.—Eph. ii. 12.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.—

Rom. vii. 18.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

—Ps. li. 5.

ALL things in nature are full of God, that is, His presence and influence; some more, some less, according to their several capacity, position, and intended use. Therefore I cannot look upon nature anywhere without seeing Him. I see Him, too, in art, in music, in science, in philosophy, in history: in fine, I see Him in every good for body, for intellect, for civilisation, for social comfort, and for national elevation, which man has educed from nature. But when I look into myself, apart from God's restoring grace, I see nothing of Him. I am "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." My thoughts, my imaginations, my desires, are without God; I have expelled Him from my heart and will have none of Him. Still I am not so utterly without God that I cannot receive Him. I have only to open the door of my heart, my inner self, and He will come streaming in as the light of the morning into a house when the shutters are thrown open, or as a friend waiting at my door, pleasingly enters when I give him a welcome. Then shall I realise a fellowship of joy, and communion of love with Him. Then will He control my inner world of life as He controls my outer. Then shall I feel that God, Nature, and I are one in the harmony and blessedness of being.

What a transformation of my soul to have God in Christ dwelling in me! Divine light takes the place of my sinful darkness; heavenly love, the place of my earthly selfishness; abiding peace, the place of my slavish fears. I am a temple of indwelling God! Now I *see* and *feel* Him in me, from Whom I was removed as far as hell from heaven. O, what boundless grace! *The God that fills the universe fills my soul! Mystery of mysteries!

MY God, I thank Thee, Who hast made The earth so bright,
So full of splendor and of joy, Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here, Noble and right.

January 22nd.

WHENEVER I know that a fellow-member in the Church to which I belong has been overtaken in a fault, do I lovingly try to restore him from his lapsed condition?—

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted — Gal. vi. 1.

We . . . that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.—Rom. xv. 1.

HE who walks in slippery places must not reprimand him, who, walking in the same, has the misfortune to fall. He may himself fall next. I once saw two men skating on the same pool. One fell all of a sudden; the other set up a loud laugh at him; in a moment or so down he came with a bang and broke the ice, and got a cold bath into the bargain. He who has no arms has little reason to jeer at him who has no feet. If I have a beam in my eye, I had better say nothing about him who has only a mote in his.

"I have known a good old man," says Bernard, "who, when he had heard of anyone that had committed some offence, was wont to say with himself, 'He fell to-day; so may I to-morrow.' " Bradford, the martyr, set down in his day-book what he saw good in anyone, regretting the want of it in himself, and praying for more grace. When he saw or heard of any evil in another, he noted it, as a warning to himself, praying for mercy from God to save him from the same.

May I be like these brethren in the Lord; yea, rather may I be like my Lord Himself, Who never mocked at others' failings, but was pitiful and of great compassion. He did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. He never trod upon one that had fallen, nor passed him by with indifference, but lifted him up and restored him.

May His love be in me, moving me to sympathise with His poor, to seek His wandering sheep, to go about doing good. It is more blessed to comfort than to censure, to encourage than to find fault.

O, God of compassion, help me to be an imitator of Thee.

SWEETLY may we all agree, Touched with softest sympathy;
Kindly for each other care; Every member feel its share;
Wounded by the grief of one, Now let all the members groan;
Honoured if one member is, All partake the common bliss.

January 23rd.

DO I live in the enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit that I am a child of God?—

As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.—Rom. viii. 14-16.

Whereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.—1 John iv. 13.

THE witness of the Spirit, says Wesley, is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given Himself for me, and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

Wesley gives in the following words an account of when and how *he* received this witness:—"I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ—Christ alone—for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."—Cowper, the poet, in describing his feelings when he received the same blessing, observes:—"Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have been overwhelmed with gratitude and joy: my eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport, I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Spirit is best described in His own words: it is 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'"

Spirit Divine! Who knowest all the mind of God in its acts of grace towards His children, reveal clearer witness to me that I am a child of God. Having Thy testimony to this sweetly blessed fact, I will doubt no more, I will sing all the day long as one of the happiest of Thy creatures. A child of God! The Spirit of God tells me so!

ASSURE my conscience of its part
In the Redeemer's blood,
And bear Thy witness with my heart
That I am born of God.
Thou art the earnest of His love,
The pledge of joys to come;
May Thy blest wings, celestial dove,
Safely convey me home.

January 24th.

WHILE it may be proper, in certain circumstances, to make vows to be more devoted to God, am I careful *HOW* I make them, lest when circumstances change I may neglect or forget them altogether?—

Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered unto the Lord, and made vows.—Jonah i. 16.

When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. . . Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.—Eccles. v. 4, 5.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord.—Ps. cxvi. 18.

MAKING vows to God without due consideration, and not paying them, is like recklessly contracting debts and not paying them. An honest man, ere he contracts debts, weighs well the certainty, as far as he can do so, of paying them at the proper time. It is so with a true Christian and the vows he makes to Christ.

Philip Henry, father of Matthew Henry, when young, made the following solemn vow: "I take God the Father to be my Shepherd; I take God the Son to be my King and Saviour; I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Guide and Sanctifier; I take the Bible to be my rule of life; I take all God's people to be my friends; and here I give my body and my soul to be God's, for God to use for ever." And he put at the end: "I make this vow of my own mind freely. God give me grace to keep it."

Vows should be few as debts should be, but as he is the happiest and safest man in trade or in any other position who can pay as he goes on, cash down, so is he who pays to God daily and hourly that which he owes Him; so that at night he can rest with the reflection, I am at peace with God and man, and owe no one anything but love. This will make his bed downy and his sleep delicious.

Alas! how many vows have I made and not paid! O God, pardon Thy servant in this! As I have nothing to pay, freely forgive me all! Never allow me to make a vow, without the probability of paying. Thou knowest me better than I know myself; help me, then, always to perform what vows I make to Thee.

THAT shall never fail,
Which my faith has in hand;
I gave my vow, my vow gave me;
Both vow and gift shall stand.

January 25th.

DO I dread God as a King of majesty and power, or love Him as my Father?—

The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him.—2 Chron. xxx. 9.

Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.—Ps. lxxxvi. 15.

Turn unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.—Joel ii. 13.

I HAVE read of a military officer, who, on a certain occasion, suddenly entered a room where his little son was playing. As the boy saw him he cried out in fear, not knowing who he was, but as soon as he heard his father's voice calling him by name, he rushed to embrace him, even with the habiliments of war upon him.

Thus it is; God, seen in the majesty of His strength and in the glory of His justice, in the judgments which He executes on the earth, and in the punishments that He inflicts upon iniquities, is terrible in power and fearful in wrath. I tremble before Him. But when I hear His voice calling me to Him, it is the voice of my Father Who is in heaven. I run at His call; He embraces me in the arms of His affection, and says, "Fear not, I am thy God; be not afraid." My trembling ceases, sweet confidence takes its place. I look up and say, "Abba, Father."

Yes, God is the God of Sinai, but of Calvary also. He hates sin and fights against it. He loves sinners and draws them to Him. To see and to feel Him only as the God of Sinai is hell; but to see and to feel Him as the God of saving grace is heaven. His law and justice are on the side of him who flies to His mercy, and not against him. If "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne, mercy and truth go before Him" to proclaim Him: and "blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."

O God, my God, whilst the guilty would flee from Thy presence in dread of Thy righteous displeasure, I come in humble boldness to Thee at the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

GOD is love; His mercy brightens All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes and woe He lightens; God is wisdom, God is love.
E'en the hour that darkest seemeth Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the mist His brightness streameth; God is wisdom, God is love.

January 26th.

WHAT do I more than others in observance of the public, social, and private duties of religion?—

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. . . . For if ye love them that love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?—Matt. v. 43, 44, 46, 47.

AS a man among men, a Christian, in body, mind, education, and circumstances, may or may not be *equal* to others; but as a "*man in Christ*," he is head and shoulders above them, like Saul among the prophets. His standard of attainments and measure of well-doing are not those of others. He does not say, I will give what others give, I will do what others do, I will go where others go, and be what others be. In Christ, he is lifted up and led forward as Christ Himself. And as Christ is always ahead of the world in all moral excellencies and beautiful acts and deeds, so is the Christian. If not, he is living below his privilege, and not fairly representing his Lord on the earth. He is a Pharisee, doing nothing more than others, when he should be re-living the life of his Master among men.

When I love my enemies, bless them that curse me, pray for them that despitefully use me and persecute me; when I am smitten on one cheek, and turn the other also; when one takes my coat, and let him have my cloak also; when I give to them that ask and turn not away from him that would borrow—then, indeed, I do more than others. This was the spirit and conduct of the Master. Shall not the servant *be* as the Master?

Divine Redeemer, fill me with Thy Spirit that I may be as distinguished among men as Thou, when Thou couldst not be hid! May I be such a burning and shining light in the midst of the darkness round about me, as shall distinguish me from others, as a lamp lighted in a street is observed more than one that is in darkness. As Peter and John, when before the Sanhedrin, were recognised as having been with Jesus, by traits which *they* only had and could not hide, so may I be known as His in the midst of this "wicked and adulterous generation."

SO wretched and obscure, The men whom ye despise,
So foolish, impotent, and poor, Above your scorn we rise;
We, through the Holy Ghost, Can witness better things,
For He, Whose blood is all our boast, Hath made us priests and kings.

January 27th.

AM I sufficiently on my guard against my desire to please God declining little by little into the desire to please myself?—

Even Christ pleased not Himself.—Rom. xv. 3.

When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.—Prov. xvi. 7.

And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do ALWAYS those things that please Him.—John viii. 29.

I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent Me.—John v. 30.

A HUSBAND, in well-to-do circumstances, so wished to please his wife that almost every time he came home from town he would bring her a costly present. Besides this, he made it his study in all things to please her. This went on for some time, until he awoke to the fact that he was deriving so much pleasure himself in pleasing his wife that he did these acts without thinking whether he pleased her or not. In a word, he had become *selfish* in his wife-pleasing.

Thus a Christian may begin his career of service for Christ from the purest motives to please Him, until it gradually dawn upon him, "Am I not doing all these things because I find pleasure in doing them? It is my delight to do them, my heaven on earth. I do not think of the *will of God*. I do not think of the aim I once had, to *please Him*. What is all my religion but *selfishness*. What am I doing but making myself my own God and Saviour?"

This danger I must guard against. *Self* must be lost sight of in my service for Christ. I must not seek my own glory, but the glory of Him "Whose I am and Whom I serve." Before I do anything for others, I must not ask "What pleasure will it give me?" or "What praise shall I receive for it?" But how can I make them happy, relieve their wants, alleviate their sorrows, speak to them of Jesus? Even as He pleased not Himself, so may I, in this regard, be a follower of Him.

Gracious, loving Christ, forgive me all my self-seeking, and grant that henceforth it may be my pleasure to please Thee, and not myself! May I not think of my own happiness, but only of doing the things which shall fulfil Thy purposes and promote Thy glory.

JESUS calls us from the worship
Of this vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, Christian, love Me more.

January 28th.

DO I unduly magnify the means of religion, and allow my mind to rest on them as *SOURCES* of good instead of channels, through which God conveys His grace to them who properly use them?—

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.—Heb. iv. 16.

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.—Eph. i. 6.

And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.—Rom. xi. 6.

WHEN the Israelites trusted in the ark of the Covenant as God, then the God of the ark left them to themselves, that they might see what the ark would do for them without Him. We know what were the results (*See 1 Sam. iv.*).

Christ alone is the "Well of Salvation" from Whom we can draw those supplies of grace which we need to refresh, to quicken, and to fertilize our souls as we journey on to the land of promise. It is by faith we go to Him and draw from Him what He freely gives. But this must be done by *means*, seen or unseen, personal or social, direct or indirect, as, in things of this world, every thing we do, we say, we receive, we give, we see, or we feel, is by *the use of means*. And yet, means do nothing by themselves, nor yield us anything *in* themselves.

There are means of *human* contrivance and appointment, which, if I use for God's glory, He may make channels of good from Himself to me, but if I trust in them as containing the good which He only can give, I shall find them empty, as pipes from which the water has been cut off. So there are means of *Divine* appointment, as the ark was, which I *must* use to receive blessings from God, but if I *trust in these* and think the good I need is in them, and because I use them I *must* be blest, God will keep back His blessing, and show me that even *His* means *without* Him are barren. I shall find myself like one going to a dry fountain with an empty pitcher, or like one going to warm himself at a grate with no fire in it.

Useful as are means (and I cannot do without them in some way or other) may I, O God, never allow my faith and love to stop short of *Thee*, as the giver of every good and perfect gift.

BUT I of means have made my boast, Of means an idol made;
The spirit in the letter lost, The substance in the shade.
Where am I now, or what my hope? What can my weakness do?
Jesus, to Thee my soul looks up; 'Tis Thou must make it new.

January 29th.

AM I afraid of the ill-opinion of the world, and do I, in the cowardice of my nature, fear its frowns or court its smiles, doing and saying under their influence things which compromise my Christian convictions, and thus virtually deny Christ before men?—

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.—John xv. 18-20.

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?—Jas. iv. 4.

BY the “world” is not to be understood the earth in which we live, so full of the beauty, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. Nor the people that live on it, for we are to love all men. But the *spirit* which is in the world, consisting of the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”

Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and the Martyrs, were hated of the world, and rather than sacrifice to its gods to please it, they endured all kinds of suffering, even unto death. Shall I, a follower of these in faith and love, dishonour them and degrade my principles by running after the world's smiles or running away from its threats? God forbid!

When Polycarp, an early Christian, was required to reproach Christ by the Proconsul Herod, he replied that for four score and six years he had served Him and He had never done him any harm; Herod must not imagine that he was going to deny Him now! “Then away with him to the fire,” said the heathen. “It is your ignorance,” said the saint, “that made you think I should do as you desire. If you know not who I am, I tell you that I am a Christian.” Rather than compromise with this worldly tyrant, Polycarp preferred going to heaven in a chariot of fire.

God forbid that I should be a world-pleaser by sacrificing my principles of truth and integrity to its vain-glorious shrine! What is to be gained by giving up God's smiles for the world's? Is there more honour in sacrificing to empty shows and vanities than in sacrificing to Infinite Wisdom, Truth, and Love?

TAKE up thy cross, then, in His strength,
And calmly every danger brave;
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
And lead to victory o'er the grave.

January 30th.

HAVE I learned the folly of trusting in man?—

Thus said the Lord, Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.—Jer. xvii. 5, 6.

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.—Prov. xxviii. 26.

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.—Ps. cxlvi. 3.

A MAN once met me in the street, and, as he shook hands with me, he said, with most saddened face and voice, "I am a ruined man."

"How so?" I inquired.

"I trusted," he said, "in Mr. — to help me out of a difficulty according to his promise, and now he writes to say he cannot possibly do it. I see no way of escape from bankruptcy."

No man that *knows* man will trust him except on conditions. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Who will trust one with a heart like this? Trusting in man is like trusting counterfeit coin, or a bank which pays its dividends out of its deposits, or an axle-tree that is cracked, or ice that is rotten. O, the desolations, the sorrows, the family disasters, and business failures, that have come out of trusting man!

In God I will put my trust and hope. On Him I will cast my care and all my tribulation. I will lean not even to my own understanding, but trust Him with all my heart. Everything and everyone are weak and inconstant apart from Him. To lean on them is to lean on a broken staff. A multitude of friends, however kind and attentive, cannot take the place of God. If He stand by me to instruct, comfort, help, and guard, I fear no failure in anything.

Nothing is trustworthy but the Immutable, the Infalible, the Eternal! On Thee I build, O Rock of Ages, and not on sand which moves as the changing tides!

O MOMENTARY grace of mortal man,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast:
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

January 31st.

IN my solitary times and seasons do I find that the Lord is with me?—

My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.—Ex. xxxiii. 14.

I will dwell in them.—2 Cor. vi. 16.

I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.—Heb. xiii. 5.

I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.—John xiv. 18.

A TRUE Christian is never less alone than when alone. In the midst of the rush of multitudes he feels strange and lonely; but in secret, with his door shut, the world and its tumult outside, he realizes the nearness of his Heavenly Father and loving Saviour. He hears His voice, he talks with Him, he feels himself enswathed in the light and love of His inspiring presence. In his quiet and secluded moments he enjoys a sweet fellowship with God which he cannot have at any other time or place.

Alone with God, or God with me when I am alone! How solemn, how sacred! yet how sweetly blessed! What rich communion! What revivings of love! What visions of faith! What revelations to the soul, which it is not lawful to utter!

I visited a poor old woman belonging to my congregation. She was entirely dependent on the church for her support. Her home was a very small cottage. The moment I entered it I saw how neat and clean everything was. She had just been gathering some sticks from the lane, with which to cook her evening meal. Her face was one of the sweetest I ever saw. It was surrounded by the strings of her snow-white cap. On the table lay a well-worn copy of the Word of God. I looked around for a daughter or friend to be her companion and caretaker, but saw none. I said, "Mother Ansel, you don't live here alone, do you?"

"Live alone! Live alone!" she exclaimed in surprise, and then, as a sweet smile lighted up her face, she added, "No, sir, the blessed Lord lives with me, and *that* makes it pleasant living!"

May I know more of that "pleasant living," which springs from the realised presence of God with me when alone! And may I be more alone that I may enjoy the blessing!

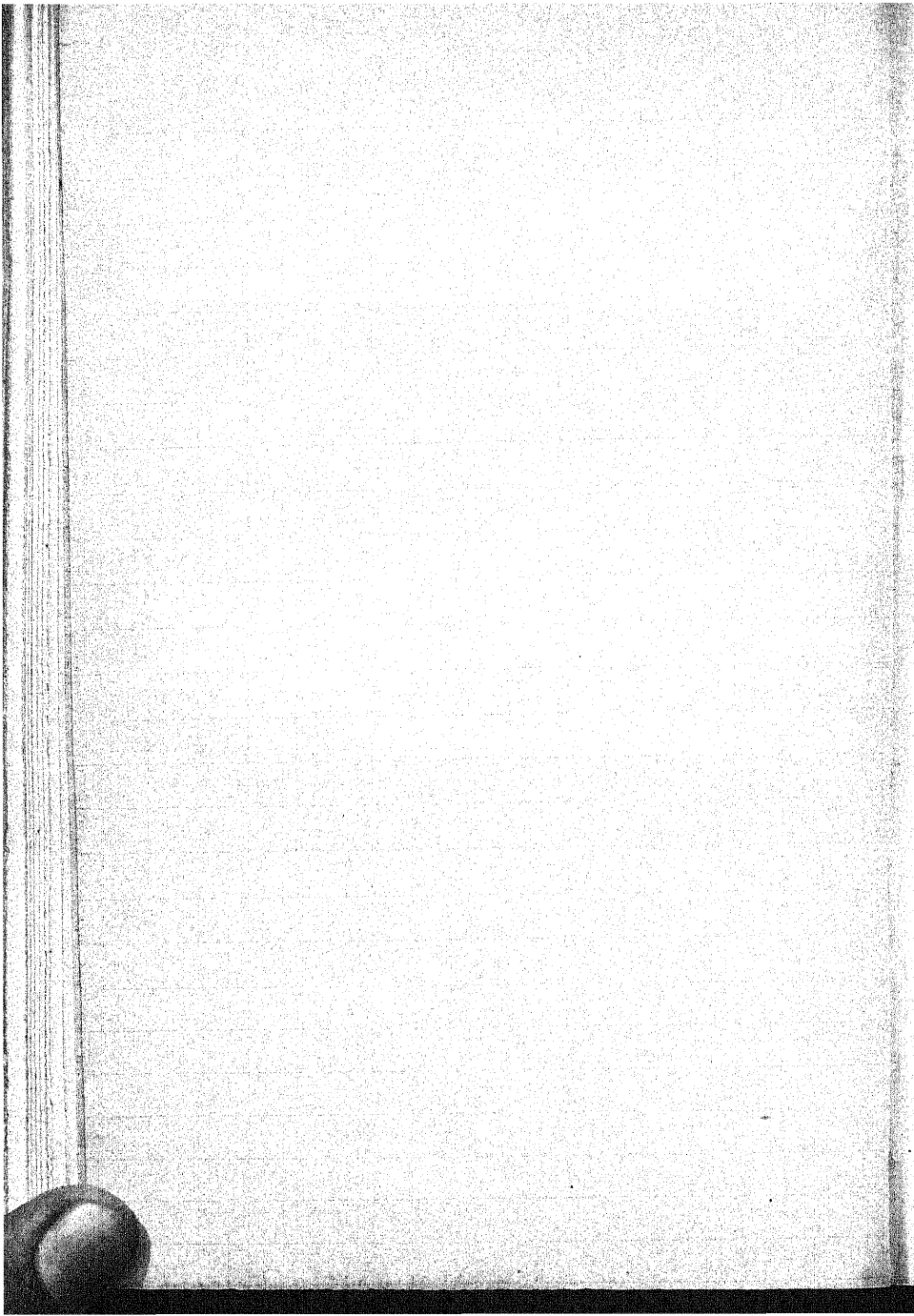
AS some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.

Beautiful Snow.

SNOWFLAKES, snowflakes everywhere,
Making all around so fair ;
Every single house in town,
Lofty white and lowly brown,
They have covered, as in play,
Frescoing their sort of way.
Some are seeming to aspire
To the church-tower and the spire :
Others, in a lowly state,
All the wood-pile decorate,
And new points the fence preface
With inimitable grace.
Fair adorned is every tree,
Wheresoever it may be,
From the stately elm-tree tall,
To the lilac by the wall. *
Every little branch and twig,
Every single bit of sprig
Of a last year's shrub or flower,
Bends beneath its weighty dower.
Evergreens ! the most of all
On their branches seems to fall ;
Just because there's place to rest,
'Mid their boughs in verdure dressed.
God is watching tenderly,
Ever watching you and me,
So his Father's heart may know
Where rich blessings to bestow ;
Bounties of His love and grace
Fall where there is lodging place.

S. M. Parker.

Memoranda.



February 1st.

DO I sufficiently praise God for the marvellous change wrought in me by His Holy Spirit?—

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2 Cor. v. 17.

In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.—Isa. xlv. 25.

Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—1 Cor. i. 30.

THE man who was born blind, mentioned in the Gospel of John, when the Lord Jesus opened his eyes, must have had an experience in relation to material things similar to that which a man has when he is born again from above—"translated from darkness into light and from the power of Satan unto God." The Rev. Peter Jones, a Canadian Indian minister, gives his experience as to his feelings at the time of his conversion in the following words: "On that day the world seemed all fresh and new to me. I looked around and the trees and the fields were so green—the lake was so blue—the sunshine so bright—the sky was so glad. Oh, that was a handsome day on which God for Christ's sake forgave my sins."

Hester Ann Rogers, wife of Rev. W. Rogers, speaks of her emotions immediately after her conversion, "My sins were gone, my soul was happy, and I longed to depart and to be with Jesus. I was truly a new creature, and seemed to be in a new world. I could do nothing but love and praise my God; and could not refrain continually repeating, 'Thou art my Father! O God, Thou art my God!' while tears of joy ran down my cheeks."

Do I not know how it is with me now in contrast to what it was before I was converted? Then I foolishly thought God was my enemy; now I am sure He is my loving Father. Life to me was a burden and sorrow; now it is a pleasure and a joy. The future was dark and forbidding; now it is full of beautiful visions of eternal realities. I used to dread death in the very thought; now I look upon it only as a door through which I shall enter into my home above. O Blessed Spirit, I do thank Thee for Thy working in me, which, through Jesus, and by the Father's love, has effected such a change in my soul.

WHAT a mercy is this, What a heaven of bliss,
How unspeakably happy am I!
Gather'd into Thy fold, With Thy people enrolled,
With Thy people to live and to die!
I rode on the sky, Freely justified I,
Nor envied Elijah his seat:
My soul mounted higher, In a chariot of fire,
And the sun it was under my feet.

DO I ever make such use of my tongue as is injurious to others, derogatory to myself, and offensive to God?—

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.—Ex. xx. 16.

He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.—Ps. ci. 7.

Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people.—

Lev. xix. 16.

Thou shalt not raise a false report.—Ex. xxiii. 1.

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.—

Ps. xxxiv. 13.

AN organ is dependent on the organist as to the music it sends forth to the listening audience. So with the tongue. The user of the tongue is the "inner man." If he is renewed in "knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," then the use he makes of this "little member" is in harmony with himself. If, on the contrary, the inner man is the "old man" of "unrighteousness and iniquity," then his use of it is according to *his* nature. As the servant said to Peter, "Thy speech bewrayeth thee," so may it be said to everyone in the use of his tongue, morally, "As thou speakest, so thou art."

I know the tongue is an "unruly member," and calls for firm control, or it will leap over the bounds of propriety. Though small, it has tremendous power of doing mischief, like a viper's sting. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." I have need, therefore, to hold it, as with bit and bridle. If I cannot always prevent what goes into my heart through my senses, I can take care what comes out through my speech. I had better never speak at all, than speak words which will scatter firebrands, arrows, and death in society. "He that hath knowledge spareth his words." "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

It is said, Augustine had engraved on his table,—

"He that doth love an absent friend to jeer,

May hence depart, no room is for him here."

A bishop once dining with him forgot this rule. Augustine rebuked him and said, he "must either blot out those lines from his table or arise from his dinner and go to his chamber." May I be equally watchful of myself, and of others.

O Lord, Who hast given me the gift of speech, and by this distinguished me from the brute, so rectify the power within me which uses this gift, that it may only use it to speak such things as shall make for peace, purity, and love!

GRANT me, Lord, from day to day Strength to watch and grace to pray;
May my lips from sin be free, Love to speak and sing of Thee;
Till in heaven I learn to raise Hymns of everlasting praise.

A M I going forward or backward in my Christian life?—

Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phi. iii. 13-14.

Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us.—Heb. xii. 1.

The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—Prov. iv. 18.

They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

I NOTICED the lengthening of the days from Dec. 21st to June 21st, and as soon as the days ceased to lengthen, they began to shorten. I observed a flower in my garden; when it stopped growing, it showed signs of decline. I saw a party rowing in a boat up a river; when they ceased to row, they floated *downwards* with the current.

Thus have I seen it with others, and felt it in myself in religion—ceasing “to go on unto perfection,” I have declined in the graces of righteousness. To stand still has been to go back. Only as I have pressed forward, have I found myself getting nearer the mark set before me in my high calling of God. Christ, my Lord, never stood still in His work while it was day. Only when the darkness of night overshadowed Him, “when no man can work,” did He say, “It is finished.” Here He reached the goal of His earthly life, and filled up the sphere of His incarnate mission. He then said, “Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.”

So may I go on in my daily circle like Him until I have *finished* the work that is given me to do. May I not be weary in well doing, “for in due season, I shall reap if I *faint not*.” May I forget the things which are behind, and reach forth to the things that are before. The *better* things are to come. The best wine runs last. Shall I stop in the middle of the race? Shall I lay the foundation, begin to build, and not finish, and they which see mock me? Shall I put my hand to the plough, look back, and not enter the kingdom? God forbid!

Blessed Redeemer! may Thy Spirit of patient continuance in doing the will of God move and sustain me until I have run my course, bow my head and die like Thee.

A WAKE, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigour on:
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.

February 2nd.

DO I ever make such use of my tongue as is injurious to others, derogatory to myself, and offensive to God?—

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.—Ex. xx. 16.

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GRANT me, Lord, from day to day Strength to watch and grace to pray;
May my lips from sin be free, Love to speak and sing of Thee;
Till in heaven I learn to raise Hymns of everlasting praise.

February 3rd.

AM I going forward or backward in my Christian life?—

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A WAKE, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigour on:
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.

February 4th.

DO I look at God's "able" from my own standpoint of faith and experience, or in the light of Himself as the Almighty?—

God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work.—2 Cor. ix. 8.

He is able to save unto the uttermost.—Heb. vii. 25.

Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.—Rom. xvi. 25, 27. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.—Jude 24.

SHALL a child judge of the strength of its father by its own strength? Shall I, a Christian, measure God's ability by my own? Certainly not. I must look at God's ability in Himself, and not in comparison with mine or even with that of an archangel. To whom can *He* be compared? He is alone, not only in the infinity of His existence, but in the almightiness of His power. As there is nothing beyond His knowledge so there is nothing beyond His ability. Whatsoever He *will*s to do either in heaven or in earth, He *can* do. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The creation of worlds and their conservation are as easy to Him as the growth and perfection of a blade of grass. As darkness and light are both alike to Him, so the doing of a great or small act.

With such a God of strength on my side, I need not fear the "principalities and powers" arrayed against me in my march to Mount Zion above. I may offer the prayer of Jehoshaphat:—"Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God!"—2 Chron. xiv. 11.

Then I will trust Him where I cannot trust myself or a troop of angels. There is nothing that I can need within the compass of my being but He can do, more readily than I can express the wish for Him to do it. I have weighed God's power in my scales of little faith and measured it by my short line of experience. Hence, I have limited the Holy One, and sinned against Him. I have at the same time deprived my soul of many a blessing. I will do so no longer; but think and speak of Him, and believe in Him, as "able to do exceeding abundantly above all I can ask or think."

SAY! which imports more plenitude of power,
Or Nature's law to fix, or to repeal?
Or make a sun, or stop his mid-career?

February 5th.

IF I cannot bring to God what offering I WOULD, do I bring Him what I CAN?—

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.—Ps. li 17.

To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word. Isa. lxvi. 2.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. v. 3.

OUR Lord is not a hard Master. Where He has not sown, He does not expect to reap. Like the woman in the Gospel, if we do what we can, He will give us His commendation.

There is an old Hebrew story that tells of a poor man who came one day to the Temple, from a sick bed, on tottering limbs. He was ashamed to come, for he was very poor, and he had no sacrifice to offer ; but as he drew near he heard the choir chanting, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it : Thou delightest not in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Other worshippers came, pressed before him, and offered their sacrifices, but he had none. At length he prostrated himself before the priest, who said, "What wilt thou, my son ? Hast thou no offering ?" And he replied, "No, my father, for last night a poor widow and her children came to me, and I had nothing to offer them but the two pigeons which were ready for the sacrifice." "Bring, then," said the priest, "an ephah of fine flour." "Nay, but, my father," said the old man, "this day my sickness and poverty have left only enough for my own starving children ; I have not even an ephah of flour." "Why, then, art thou come to me ?" said the priest. "Because I heard them singing, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' Will not God accept my sacrifice if I say, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner' ?" Then the priest lifted the old man from the ground, and said, "Yes, thou art blessed, my son ; it is the offering which is better than thousands of rivers of oil."

When I feel that I cannot come before God with the voice of praise or the offering of prayer, I will bring my contrite spirit. This He will accept, and give me again, restored to the joy of His salvation.

O God, I thank Thee for Thy condescending readiness to accept such a sacrifice from me.

O JESUS, full of grace ! the sighs
Of a sick heart with pity view ;
Hark, how my silence speaks and cries
"Mercy, Thou God of mercy, show !"

February 6th.

AM I doing all I can as a disciple of Jesus to increase the number of His followers?—

Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.—Num. x. 29.

Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.—Luke xiv. 23.

Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering.—2 Tim. iv. 2.

They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word.—Acts viii. 4.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied . . . greatly.—Acts vi. 7.

AS I look into the political world I see one party zealously affected to win over to its side those that are of the opposite opinion. Certainly I ought to be equally zealous to win for Christ those that are estranged from Him. If Jesus has done so much for me, and I have found so much good in fellowship with His people, it is only right that I should do all I can, according to my opportunities and ability, to persuade others to come and receive the same benefits. I shall have none the less myself, but those who are brought will become happy partakers; and to see their happiness and to know I am pleasing my Lord, will it not be an enhancement of my own bliss?

Alas, am I not too lukewarm in this work? I do not, as I ought, seek the wandering sheep to bring them to the fold. I am too satisfied to "eat my morsel alone," while thousands around are perishing for the bread of life. I am at ease in Zion, while she is calling for my activity in service to build her walls and enlarge her borders. Should I not give heed to the warning of Zion's King, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion?"

When Andrew had found Jesus, he immediately went and sought his brother Simon, to bring him to Jesus. So Philip, when he had found Messias, went and brought Nathanael. This *personal* effort is the most effectual way of hastening on the universal coming of the kingdom of Christ.

Spirit of Jesus! make me as much or more an enthusiast in this, than the spirit of the world makes men in their zeal to bring one another over to their respective ways of thinking and living.

FIRST seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
Beneath the shadow of His roof,
Till thou have scann'd His features well,
And known Him for the Christ by proof :
Then, potent with the spell of heaven,
Go, and thy erring brother gain !

February 7th.

IN my use of the Scriptures, do I keep in view the pre-eminence design for which they were given by God?—

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—2 Tim. iii. 15-17.

My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not.—1 John ii. 1.

In reading any book of human authorship it is important to keep before the mind what is the object and aim of the author. Without this, one may misjudge the book, and fail to derive from it the good it is intended to convey. So as regards the Scriptures. What is the design for which God has given man the Scriptures? For mere criticism? If so, their end is only intellectual. They are given for the interests of man's spiritual life, as nature is for his temporal. One may criticise nature in its laws, in its orders, in its colours, in its varieties of plants, flowers, fruits, and vegetables, but this is not the *design* for which "God has given the earth to the children of men." Nature is designed as the source of supply of such things as man needs in his physical being. This is primary, and all scientific or philosophical study of its laws is secondary, only as it shall contribute to the primary.

So with the Word of God as regards man's spiritual life and its necessities. If I only *criticise* the Scriptures, I am like a thirsty man who sits in judgment on a vessel, but drinks not the water in it which is designed to quench his thirst. I will not be so foolish. I will remember God has given me His Word "to make me wise unto salvation," "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that I may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This end fulfilled in me, then I may or may not criticise it, but not so as to frustrate the grace of God in me. After I have quenched my thirst, shall I destroy the spring which alone can give me any future supply?

O God, Thy Book, which has made me wise unto salvation, is to me more "precious than gold or fine gold." May Thy restraining hand be upon every Jehoiakim, who would cut it to pieces with his pen-knife of criticism until he has spoiled it! (Jer. xxxvi. 23).

THERE is a book who runs may read,
Which heavenly truth imparts,
And all the lore its scholars need:
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

February 8th.

WHEN, as a branch of the Vine, I am being pruned, do I bear in mind that the Husbandman who prunes me is my Proprietor, and that the object of His pruning is to make me more fruitful, that I may glorify Him?—

Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me.—John xv. 2-4.

SO have I observed a gardener stand by his vine, looking on this branch and then on that, to see which needed pruning and the best way he could do it, not so much for ornament as for *fruitfulness*. What he did, he did most thoughtfully, tenderly, carefully. *All the time he was close to the vine.* Thus it is with a physician when he performs an operation, on which depends the very life of his patient. "Do not leave me, dear papa," said a child as she was walking with her father in a dark and lonely road by night, "Take my hand in yours and hold me fast, and keep close to me as we walk through this dark lane." "Yes, darling," the father replied, "I will keep close to you and hold your hand, so that no harm shall come to you."

So my Father, in all His disciplinary dealings with me, and in every unknown way in which He leads me, will keep close by my side and not forsake me. I can trust His wisdom and goodness to do everything right and well. I am His, and all He does will be to make me better, happier, and more fruitful in holy living. O, how delightful to think that such is the end of all God's dealings with me. If He give me a cup to drink that is bitter, it is to cure some evil. If He lead me through darkness, it is to bring me into clearer light. If He correct me, it is for my profit. If He humble me, it is that He may lift me up to heaven!

Blessed Father! I love Thee for Thy love ; I praise Thee for Thy grace! Wherever Thou leadest me I will joyfully go ; whatever Thou doest to me, I will not complain. Thou knowest what is best. Take what Thou wilt away, only leave me Thyself!

O CLEANSE me then, and make me to abide Wholly in Thee, to drink Thy heavenly dew, And, watered daily with my tears, to grow : Thou art the truth, Thy promise is my guide ; Prepare me, when Thou comest, Lord, to show Fruits answering to the stock on which I grow.

AS *the love of God is that fire on the altar of my heart with which all my sacrifices must be kindled, do I so attend to it that it shall never go out?—*

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—Rom. v. 5.

Let all your things be done with charity.—Rom. xvi. 14.

And now abideth faith, hope, love: these three; but the greatest of these is love.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Follow after love.—1 Cor. xiv. 1.

Love is the fulfilling of the law.—Rom. xiii. 10.

BUNYAN, in his "Pilgrim's Progress," tells of "Christian" being shown a fire on which water was being poured, and yet the fire burned all the brighter. He could not understand this wonder until the Interpreter showed him, how, while one was pouring on the *water*, there was another pouring on *oil*, which made the fire burn the more intensely.

What is this fire but the love of God in the heart of a believer; and what is this water but the world's influences flowing in upon the heart to quench it; and what is this oil but the grace of the Holy Spirit feeding and strengthening this love of God, so that like Elijah's fire from heaven on Mount Carmel, it licks up the water, causing the flames to mount higher and higher towards their Source and End?

May I always live in "communion with the Holy Ghost," that He may, in response to my needs, constantly pour into my heart the oil of His grace. The spirit of the world as I come in contact with it in business, in society, yea, in the church, pours its insidious, quenching, killing influences into my inner life; and only by the grace of God received every moment will the fire of heavenly love keep burning within me.

O Love of loves! Be Thou in me the celestial Fire, always burning, all-illuminating, all-refining, until my whole nature shall be permeated with Thee! As the Jewish priest, by use of means, kept the fire which first came from heaven, constantly burning on the altar of sacrifice, so may I, as "a priest to God," by means Thou hast appointed, never let Thyself go out in me.

O BLESSEDNESS all bliss above,
When Thy pure fires prevail!

Love only teaches what is Love;

All other lessons fail.

We learn its name, but not its powers—
Experience only makes it ours.

February 10th.

IF I am not contented with such things as I have in this life, should I be contented with any other, or with more of what I have, if I had them?—

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.—Heb. xiii. 5.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content.—Phil. iv. 11.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.—1 Titus vi. 6-8.

IN the whole history of the Blessed Saviour there is not a single instance recorded of Him being discontented with His lot; and what that lot was, how far below that of any man ever born, we know. If, then, the King Himself was contented in His circumstances, shall the subject, who has rebelled against Him, and is so much better off than He was, complain?

It is said that an Englishman is only satisfied when he is grumbling. But this should not be said of a follower of Jesus. His satisfaction should be contentment in his heart, like a crown, making him a king to rule himself and his circumstances in supreme authority. A man, who lived in a hut, once said to a rich man, who wanted to bribe him with gold to do for him some dishonourable work, "Do you suppose that I, who am satisfied with this for my dinner (holding a turnip in his hand) can be bribed by your money to do your dirty work?" This man was not far from the kingdom of God. The old woman, who said to her minister, when he called to see her as she was getting her "tea," "All this," a crust in a cup of hot water, "and Christ, praise the Lord!" was a living follower of Him Who "had not where to lay His head," and yet rejoiced that His meat was to do the will of His Father Who was in heaven.

Blessed God, give me Thy grace to make me contented with that state of life in which *Thou* hast placed me, and if in anything I wish to be different may it be as regards higher attainments in the knowledge and love of Thyself. And if *Thou* art pleased to change my lot in this life higher or lower, Thy will be done!

MY conscience is my crown,
Contented thoughts my rest;
My heart is happy in itself,
My bliss is in my breast!
Enough I reckon wealth,
A mean the surest lot,
That lies too high for base contempt,
Too low for envy's shot.

February 11th.

IN all my business or family affairs (small or great), do I always ask my heavenly Father to guide me, and to give me grace to follow His guidance?—

Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.—Ps. cxlvii. 1.

I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.—1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

IT is said that Moses built the Tabernacle in all things "after the pattern given him in the mount." Hence it was that God associated Himself with it as expressive of His wisdom and will. The Apostles, in their labours for their Lord, followed His instructions; therefore He was with them and in their work. An architect supplies the plans of a building and superintends its erection, but the erection of the building itself is by workmen; the structure, however, expresses the mind of the architect.

If I go to God and lay before Him my wishes in prayer, and they approve themselves to Him, He will in His own way and time draw His plans before my mind, and if I adopt them He will guide and help me in carrying them out. My procedure will be under His supervision. I shall be like a man who works by a pattern before him and with materials provided for him. When my life-work is finished, I shall receive my wages, but God the praise for the wisdom and grace in the work accomplished.

What sweeter reflection can one have than this, "My life, not merely as a whole, but in its details, is according to plan, not my own, but the Lord's. I may sometimes make a mistake, as every workman does, and though this was not in the plan, it does not spoil the work as a whole. When completed, and the survey made, all failings will be lost sight of in the entirety."

I must not on this account be careless in living after the pattern given me. I must act in all things so discreetly and circumspectly that no *voluntary* and *intended* failure appear in all my work.

Gracious Master, be my Helper as well as my Teacher, in all things!

EXCEPT the Lord conduct the plan,
The best concerted schemes are vain,
And never can succeed;
We spend our wretched strength for naught:
But if our works in Thee be wrought,
They shall be blest indeed.

February 12th.

WHAT is my faith in God as regards the conversion of my children?—

I will establish My covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.—Gen. xvii. 7

I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.—Gen. xviii. 19.

For the promise is unto you and to your children.—Acts ii. 39.

AS a Christian parent I am bound, not only by the laws of nature, but by the principles of my religion, to do all I can to train my children for God. But while I do my duty in this, my faith must be in God, as my God, that He will do His work according to His promise.

There was a Christian mother who had a large family of children, and as they grew up they all became Christians, and joined the Church. One day her minister called to visit her. In the course of conversation he said, "My good friend, Mrs. —, what a happy woman you must be, to know that all your children have joined the Church, and are trying to serve God!"

"Yes," she replied, "I am very happy to think that all my children are Christians. And if I had a hundred, it would be the same with them all."

"But how do you know that?" asked the minister.

"I know it because of God's promise. The promise which God made to Abraham was—'*I will be a God to THEE*' God made the same promise to me when I became a Christian. And He makes that promise to all His people. I believed God, just as Abraham did. And He has never failed to be a God to me. But then God promised, at the same time, to be a God to Abraham's children, or seed, as well as to himself. And God has made the same promise to me. I believe His promise, and He has fulfilled it by making all my children Christians."

What sublime faith! What blessed results honouring it! May my faith be equal to it; and may all my children be saved of the Lord!

How happy the children with a mother of such faith!
How happy the mother with all her children made Christians by saving grace!

COME, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To Whom we for our children cry;
The good desired and wanted most,
Out of Thy richest grace supply:
The sacred discipline be given,
To train and bring them up for heaven.

February 13th.

WHATEVER my circumstances or condition in this life, do I glorify my Lord, trust Him, and bless His holy name?—

Trust in Him at ALL times.—Ps. lxi. 8.

I will bless the Lord at ALL times; His praise shall CONTINUALLY be in my mouth.—Ps. xxxiv. 1.

Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God CONTINUALLY.—Hob. xiii. 15.

In EVERYTHING give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.—1 Thess. v. 18.

MANY are the afflictions of the righteous." Yes, and *man*, irrespective of being righteous, "is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." The true Christian, however, has troubles peculiar to himself, as such. What, then, is he to do in these? Complain, or seek help in sensuous means? No, but as a Christian seek it in *Christian* means. This is one: "In everything give thanks"; "bless the Lord at all times." What, give thanks for the loss of a thousand pounds? Bless the Lord for the death of children or husband?" The words do not *say so*. But "*in everything give God thanks,*" and bless His name. Many of our troubles, and, perhaps, the heaviest of them, the Lord has nothing to do with, only by *permission*, as in the case of Job. In *these* trials we are to thank God as though we were not in them. This will foil the purpose of our enemies, and bring special help from God to bear them nobly until they have passed away.

We must be like that good Italian Bishop, who was uniformly happy. Some one wished to know the secret. He said it was "by making a right use of his eyes." "How so?" "In whatsoever state I am," he said, "I first look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business is to get there. I then look down on the earth, and call to mind how small a space I shall occupy in it after death. Lastly, I look abroad and observe how many there are that have more troubles than I have. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all my troubles will end, and that I have no reason to complain, but every reason *in everything* to give God thanks."

O Lord, give me this happy, thankful spirit!

SOME murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,—
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled,
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

February 14th.

*A*M I one who says, *I must rise in life ; if I cannot do so by fair means, I must do so by what means I can ; but rise I must?—*

What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.—Matt. xvi. 26.

He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.—Prov. xxviii. 20.

If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.—Ps. lxii. 10.

Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way.—Ps. cxix. 36, 37.

“**M**ORE haste, less speed.” “Mind not high things.” I heard of a gentleman who was in the act of reaching an article from a shelf that was a little beyond his usual stretch, and in the act ruptured a blood vessel and soon after died. I was once riding in a vehicle driven by a man who was anxious to catch a train. He dashed along at such a rate as to come in collision with a corner round which he was turning. He upset himself and me, broke his trap, and lost the train besides. I had a friend who made such haste to catch a train, and so exhausted himself, that on reaching the booking office he fell down dead.

Such facts as these may serve to illustrate the moral consequences of making haste to reach some ambitious end we have set our hearts upon. Our very haste may cause our failure. Or if we attain what we seek, it may utterly disappoint our expectations. Besides if in the way of our attaining it, we lose health, or character, or self-respect, or our souls, what is our gain? Then, if we get the things we seek, how much have we seized of that which belonged to others, and which in reason they had as much right to as ourselves, but because we with greater strength pushed them out of the way, could not realize. Moreover, during this time of such seeking, what is becoming of our interests which are infinitely higher than all these secular ones? They are neglected, if not despised: they move farther and farther from our reach, until death comes and wrenches us from our worldly gains, ushering us into a state in which we shall be poor indeed, for ever.

O God, open mine eyes to see the folly of this world's wisdom, which runs after shadows and leaves the substance behind, which seeks to rise by the way angels fell.

TO climb steep hills
Requires slow pace at first. . . We may outrun
By violent swiftness that which we run at,
And lose by over-running.

February 15th.

IS my chief happiness in life that which I have in God, or in the creature?—

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.—Isa. lxi. 10.

God, my exceeding joy.—Ps. xliii. 4.

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.—Ps. cxlix. 2.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.—Lam. iii. 24.

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and my cup.—Ps. xvi. 5.

NOWHERE in the Bible do we read of riches, learning, power, amusements, apparel, or ought else of a finite character giving happiness. In this, human experience in all ages, agrees. Literally and correctly speaking, there is only one happiness for man in this world of being ; that is, God. True, the Scriptures say the pure in heart are happy, but it is because they *see God* ; the pardoned are blest, but it is because they have the *favour of God* ; the righteous dead are happy, but it is because they *die in the Lord*.

Nothing created, nothing dependent, can give happiness to me any more than I can give it to myself. My happiness is in God, as the happiness of a child is in its mother. It is the realisation of God within me, giving harmony, peace, and purity to all the powers of my being. Independently and self-sufficiently happy in Himself, He makes me so by virtue of His in-dwelling. If I am happy in the midst of the beauties and glories of nature it is not they which make me happy, but God in them reflecting Himself upon my inner consciousness. If I am happy in the Kingdom of Grace, in the realisation of its unspeakable riches, it is not they which make me happy ; it is God in them in the revelation of Himself in Christ. Thus having God as the universal Bliss in all things, I am happy in all things ; yet were all things annihilated and I and God left, I should be none the more or none the less happy. "*I will go to God, my exceeding joy.*"

What an endless, boundless, fathomless, ocean of happiness I have in God !

Blessed Father, cast me not out from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me !

○ GREAT, good God ! my pray'r is to neglect
The shows of fantasy, and turn myself
To Thy unfenced, unmeasured, warmth and light !
Then were all shows of things a part of truth ;
Then were my soul, if busy or at rest,
Residing in the house of perfect Peace.

February 16th.

A M I so blinded by the "god of this world" that I cannot see the precipices of ruin over which he is leading me?—

If our Gospel be veiled, it is veiled to them that are perishing. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.—2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.—2 Thes ii. 10.

A BLIND man, and he who sees live in the same world; but while one sees the light and the things it reveals, the other sees nothing at all. So it is morally. While some walk in the light of the Gospel, enjoying its revelations of the beauties of holiness, the peace of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit, others are blind and see them not. With the things of the flesh, such as riches, pleasures, greatness, pomp, rank, honours, eating and drinking without restraint, indulging their passions without reason, the "god of this world" has blinded the eyes of their mind so that they see not the superior nature of the things of the Gospel. They are led on to ruin like cattle to slaughter, not knowing their near destruction, and licking the very weapons which shall destroy them.

How sad when a rational and immortal soul is so deceived that he calls darkness light and light darkness; that he mistakes danger for safety, and rushes to irretrievable ruin!

Some years ago a serious accident happened on a railway. There was an alarming collision of two trains—one, in rapid progress, dashing into the rear of another, standing at a little station. Several lives were lost, and many persons injured. But how was it caused? The signalman declared that the red signal, as seen by him, showed danger, and ordered delay. The engine-driver of the train, which rushed on against the other, swore with equal certainty that the green light was clearly visible, and authorized his speed and advance. At last the mystery was accidentally explained. The driver was found to be colour-blind; his vision was defective; he could not discern any difference between red and green hues; and hence the fatal result.

My God! If I think I see and yet am blind, open my eyes this moment and give me a clear vision of the things that make for my salvation!

WALK in the light! and thou shalt see
A path, though thorny, bright;
For God, by grace, shall dwell in thee,
And God Himself is light!

February 17th.

AS a child of God, must I not expect to have His corrections and chastisements, as well as His smiles?—

If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. But if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.—Heb. xii 8, 7, 6.

What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?—Job. ii. 10.

THE child of a father who is *capricious* may say, “Father smiles and praises me to-day; and this I take as a sign that to-morrow he will frown and punish me”; but of a father who is loving and just, a child will say, “Father always smiles on me when I am good, but if I do what is wrong he is sure to chastise me for it to make me better.”

Is not this quite right? A father who smiles alike on a child when he does right or wrong, is one whose conduct is an injury to his child rather than a blessing; but a father who smiles when he should and chastens when he *ought* is a model father.

Such is *my* Father who is in heaven. When He chastises me I am quite sure I have been doing something which I ought not, of which He is a better judge than I am; and when He smiles upon me I am equally sure I have been doing something of which He approves. I should be a most unreasonable child to expect my Father to be always pleased with me, whatever I did. Indeed, I should not respect and love Him so much as I do, if He were.

Almost everything needs correction to be made perfect and to fulfil its end. Pupils and their lessons in a school; trees and plants in a garden; earth, air, water, fire; all animals intended for domestic or business use. I, then, must not expect to be trained for heaven without chastisement. Others may thank God for *ease*; I will thank Him for *all* things, because they work together for my good.

Heavenly Father, I am Thy child, and I know Thou lovest me even as I love Thee; therefore I am pleased that Thou shouldest deal with me in Thy own righteous and loving way.

○ KEEP up life and peace within,
If I must feel Thy *chastening* rod!
Yet kill not me, but kill my sin,
And let me know Thou art my God.
O give my soul some sweet foretaste
Of that which I shall shortly see!
Let faith and love cry to the last,
“Come, Lord, I trust myself with Thee.”

February 18th.

AS I hear of death, meditate upon it, and sometimes see it in my friends and neighbours, am I afraid of it, as that which sooner or later will be my doom?—

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me : Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.—Ps. xxiii. 4.

When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.—Isa. xliii. 2.

IT is not for one united to Him Who has conquered death, to be afraid to die. When dead, what will death be to me ? While living, I have nothing to do with it. Sufficient unto the hour is the evil thereof. My thoughts of dying are not death. While I live I must live to God, and leave death where it is. When it comes to me or I go to it, it will only be like going to sleep when I am weary. Does not the tired, care-worn, troubled man welcome sleep ? Do we not in sleep forget all, and rest ? Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Jesus when they awake ; so shall they ever be with the Lord !

When the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine lay on his death-bed, one of his elders said to him, " Sir, you have given us many good advices, may I ask what you are now doing with your own soul ? " " I am just doing with it," he replied, " what I did forty years ago ; I am resting on that word, ' I am the Lord thy God.' " Another friend put the question, " Sir, are you not afraid of your sins ? " " Indeed, no," was his answer, " ever since I knew Christ I have never thought highly of my frames and duties, nor am I *slavishly* afraid of my sins." At another time he said, " I know that when my soul forsakes this tabernacle of clay it will fly as naturally to my Saviour's bosom as the bird to its beloved nest."

May I, like good Mr. Erskine and myriads of others, thus fly away on the wings of death to find repose in the bosom of my Lord ! There is nothing to fear in going home. I am sure of a hearty welcome from my Father and brethren. " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. . . . Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them."

O Thou, Who art the " Resurrection and the Life," now plant in me that divine courage of Thine, which shall face death as calmly as an infant goes to sleep in its mother's arms.

RUE not my death ! Rejoice at my repose !
It was no death to me—but to my woe ;
The bud was opened to let out the rose—
The chain unloosed to let the captive go.

February 19th.

I*N the spiritual conflict in which I am engaged, do I remember my own weakness and inexperience—the number, strength, and temper of my enemies—especially the infinitely greater means of succour and deliverance which come from my heavenly King and Father?—*

We wrestle . . . against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Eph. vi. 12.

The Lord shall fight for you.—Ex. xiv. 14.

Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.—2 Kings vi. 16.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.—2 Chron. xvi. 9.

A SOLDIER who is called to fight for his king and country, looks to himself, to his enemies, and to his equipment. With these three *looks*, he goes forth to the battlefield. So may I, called upon as I am to “fight the good fight of faith.” If I look to *myself*, I see nothing but weakness, ignorance, and cowardice, which would deter me from fighting at all. If I look to my *foes*, I see them to be too numerous, mighty, and subtle for me to face. If I look to my *equipment* I see that which, even in the presence of my weakness and my foes, is capable of giving me the victory. Great as is Satan, my Captain is greater. Numerous are my enemies, but more are they that are for me than all that are against me. My enemies come to me as Goliath of Gath to David, in their own name and strength; I meet them in the “name of the Lord of Hosts,” as David met the giant. The battle is the Lord’s, not mine, only as His soldier. With Him in me, round me, over me, I fear not. “Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident”: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, the Lord is the strength of my life.”

Whilst I overcome my enemies without, I must not forget myself, and the enemies within. If I do not conquer *these*, they will betray me, and I shall be undone. The evil heart of unbelief and all its allies must be subdued. Then shall I be more than conqueror.

Blessed God, in Thee do I trust: let me not be confounded. When my enemies and foes rise up against me, be Thou my Shield and my Help!

BLESSED are they who die for God,
And earn the martyr’s crown of light;
Yet he who lives for God may be
A greater conqueror in His sight.

February 20th.

DO I seek for the fulfilment of the promise of God, that He will give me a new heart?—

A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh! And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.—Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27.

I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God; and they shall be My people.—Jer. xxxi. 33.

FOR one to know his disease and a physician who can cure him, yet not go to him for a cure, is equivalent to not knowing his disease at all. The result of his conduct is the same. If a man knows that his watch wants a new main-spring and will not take it to the watchmaker to have one put in, can he expect his watch to give him the correct time of day?

So of myself; I know that my "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Its "thoughts and imaginations are only evil continually." It deceives me in its motives; it blinds me to my best interests; it calls good evil and evil good; it is an "evil heart of unbelief," and leads me away from the living God. I cannot rely on it for anything that is noble, virtuous, and God-ward. But while I know all this, and more, of my heart, I know of Him who will give me a *new* heart—not *mend* the old one—but give me a new one *entirely*. He will take away the old heart of stone, and give me one of flesh. He will also put His Spirit into it to move and actuate me to walk in His statutes. My inner and outer life will then be in harmony with the Pattern life of the universe.

Now, if I do not go to this Divine Benefactor for the new heart, which He promises to give without money or price, in exchange for my old one, I must be content with what I have, suffering all its inconveniences. But shall I be so thoughtless and unwise? Shall I carry within me this fountain of evil when I may have a well-spring of purity and happiness?—the dead weight of a heart of stone, when I may have one as light as love and life?

O God, move in me, constrain me to come to Thee for this great gift, which Thou are waiting to bestow.

MY heart, O God, be wholly Thine,
I would not keep it back from Thee;
Nor wish to shun the Grace divine,
Which asks this humble gift of me.
O, take it now, and let Thy love
For evermore within me dwell;
And may Thy Spirit from above
Teach me to serve my Master well.

February 21st.

IN the midst of so much competition, strife, and rush in business; as well as so many meetings and excitements in the church, do I take care to look after my own spiritual life?—

They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.—Lam. i. 6.

One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.—Luke x. 42.

And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.—Mark vi. 31.

WHEN I speak to a Christian and suggest, that he should be more attentive to spiritual things in himself and in his family, and he says in reply, "Business is business, and I must attend to it;" I conclude that his estimate of the relative value of things is perverted. True, my brother, business is business, and must be attended to: but have you no business to follow save buying and selling in your shop? sowing and reaping in your fields? You cannot think that God has given such powers as you possess, to use *only* on a level with earth, and in things which perish in the using. What is your *spirit* for, if not to be fervent in goodness, and in serving God? Have you nothing to do for your family besides provide them with *worldly* comforts? Do not the birds and beasts do the same for their young? Are you meant to be only as an *animal* to your children?

Is it come to *this* with me, O Lord, that the shadowy has taken the place of the *real*? It cannot be, that I have so far fallen from my first love, as to rob God of the time I owe Him for personal or family devotion, and give it to the world. If so, I must have forgotten myself, or been deluded by the enemy. What follows this? Do I not neglect my Bible for my ledger, and my children for my workmen? Surely the realities of religion, as regards my soul, my family, and the church of God, are of more consequence than the things of my business. But do I not *know*, that my business would be attended to *better*, if I first attended to my religious life, and that of my home?

God of the real and true, do Thou give me of Thy Spirit, that He may always influence me to attend to things according to their respective importance as seen in the light of eternity. May I never sell my birthright and that of my household, in the kingdom of God, for what is no better than a "mess of pottage."

LO! I come with joy to do The Master's blessed will,
Him in outward works pursue, And serve His pleasure still;
Faithful to my Lord's command, I still would choose the better part,
Serve with careful Martha's hands, And loving Mary's heart.

February 22nd.

DO I know that, under forms of apparent good, often lie concealed the greatest evils?—

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.—Gen. iii. 6, 7.

TO see a thing is not to know it; though it may lead to a desire for it, and desiring it may lead to the acquisition of it; then, having acquired it, we may know it for our good or our evil. Looking on the wine when it is *red*, one cannot tell what may be in it; but if he drink it, he may find that it “biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.” (Prov. xxiii. 32.) Eve looked on the forbidden tree and desired its fruit; her desire led her to pluck it; she plucked and ate; and then knew, to her own sorrow and the world’s ruin, what she had done.

I must neither go by *appearances*, nor by my *desires*, but by Divine commandment. If God has said “Thou shalt not,” whatever may be the appearances or my desires, I must not partake of it. Many things in this world *seem* to be good and right which I may *like* and covet; but if I take them, they may prove my destruction. Such, sometimes, may be books, dress, company, amusements, and other things. Under a royal apparel may be a body of leprosy. We read in the Bible of a queen who made her face beautiful with paint, but she was *Jezabel*. An “apple of Sodom” is very tempting to look at, but he who eats one finds it to be only *dust*. An ancient Pharisee did “indeed appear beautiful outside,” but to be like him in truth was to be “full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” My only safety is in obeying the commands of my heavenly Father, however much they may go against what seems “good and pleasant to the eyes and to be desired to make one wise.”

O Thou Who gavest the commandments, give me grace to keep them fully, and not to be blinded by the glare of outward shows or charmed with the music of Siren songs.

THERE is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts;
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk!

February 23rd.

DO I, as often as opportunity occurs, observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?—

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread : And when He had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat : this is My body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood : this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.—1 Cor. xi. 23-26.

THIS is the most holy and blessed ordinance which Christ has established in His church. The essential qualification on my part for its observance is, *Faith*. "Draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort." Faith is the eye that discerns the Lord's body. Faith sees Christ in the breaking of the bread. Faith gives to the soul a realization of the living Presence of its Redeemer, not only as in the ordinance itself, but as in its personal experience. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye. Christ's essence is in heaven, but He is in the believer's heart by His Spirit and grace.

Love of the brethren is another qualification. If I am not in "love and charity with my neighbours," alas, my faith will avail nothing, and I shall not partake to edification.

How many times have I forgotten or forsaken this precious ordinance, much to my soul's loss, through my unbelief or through a mistaken notion of my unworthiness? How often have I turned my back upon it through sheer indifference, or perhaps I wanted the time to attend to some semi-worldly company. But when I have observed it in faith and love, what a "feast of fat things" it has been to me! It has indeed been a banquet of the King's providing! I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His banner over me was love! He made Himself known to me in His glorified wounds as my Saviour. I did not eat His flesh nor drink His blood, but saw *Him* by faith and embraced Him as my "Beloved."

Dear Redeemer, Who by Thy death didst purchase my salvation, and institute this Sacrament in memory of the same, forgive my neglect of it, and stir me up to a more faithful observance of it.

I ASK not, Lord, the mystery hidden
Beneath those words so dark and deep ;
I would but do as Thou hast bidden,
In simple faith Thy mandate keep.

February 24th.

DO I find, according to God's word, that godliness is profitable unto all things?—

Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance.—1 Tim. iv. 7-9.

IT is a great mistake to imagine that we lose in this world's things by being religious. Whatever we give to God, He more than repays. One feature of godliness is to "honour the Lord with our substance and the firstfruits of our increase," and one of its profits is in corresponding returns.

A collecting agent for the American Bible Society called on a plain farmer for his contribution. He was not by any means a wealthy man—but worked his own farm. He looked over his books for a few moments, and then said, "My contribution this year will be seventy dollars."

"Why, this is a large contribution," said the collector. "How can you afford to give so much?"

"I will tell you," said the farmer. "Six years ago I felt that I was not giving as much as I ought to give. So I made up my mind that I would try to give in proportion to what the Lord was giving me. This was the plan I adopted. I laid aside for the Lord's use five cents on every bushel of wheat; three cents on every bushel of oats or barley; and ten cents out of every dollar made by the wool and butter, and other things that I sold. At the close of the first year I found that I had twenty dollars to give away. The second year I had thirty-five dollars; the third year, forty-seven; the fourth, forty-nine; the fifth, fifty-nine; and this year I have seventy dollars to give away. My own experience proves the truth of Solomon's words, when he says, in one place, *'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth:'* and in another place, *'The liberal soul shall be made fat.'*"

"And there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty." "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." The principle involved in these words not only applies to *giving*, but to the whole round of Christian duty.

May I never give to God with a view to profit in secular things, but from a sense of duty and privilege.

GRANT me a heart, dear Lord, to yield Thee gladly, freely, of Thine own! With the sunshine of Thy goodness melt my thankless heart of stone! Till my cold and selfish nature, warmed by Thee, at length believe That more happy and more blessed 'tis to give than to receive.

February 25th.

IN any extremity of temporal need, can I rejoice in God, and trust Him for a supply?—

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.—Hab. iii. 17, 18.

The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail.—1 Kings xvii. 14.

PRAISING the Lord in want is a wonderful remedy against murmuring, and brings a speedy supply. When my need of everything drives me to Him Who filleth all in all; when my sorrows move me to go to my consoling Father for comfort; when my tribulations lead me to seek peace in Him Who “is our Peace”;—then, indeed, I have reason to rejoice in God and to trust Him.

What are blossomless fig-trees, empty stalls, fruitless vines, to the abounding fulness of richer, more enduring, good things I have in Christ? A gale or even a storm is welcome rather than a calm, when it favours the mariner in his passage home. Bitter medicines are readily taken when the assurance is given that they will effect a cure. “Strike, Lord, strike,” Luther was wont to say in any adversity, “but do not forsake me.” David played his harp, and the music chased the evil spirit out of Saul. I knew a father who when his daughters seemed in any trouble, would join them in singing a hymn of praise, which was followed by sunny faces and blithesome hearts. So it is a *happy* thing to rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of my salvation.

It was when Jehoshaphat and his appointed singers praised the “Beauty of holiness” that deliverance came to him in his “extremity.” Mungo Park was not long before he was rescued from a desolate island, after he began to praise the Lord. “I soon found the Lord,” says one who had been seeking Him a long time, “when I began to praise Him for what He had done for me.” It is a “*good* thing” to praise the Lord, as well as “pleasant” and “comely.”

O Father everlasting, I will, if Thou come and help me, sing to Thee the sweetest praise my loving heart contains, in my deepest need.

O LET my trembling soul be still,
While darkness veils this mortal eye,
And wait Thy wise, Thy holy will;
Wrapped yet in fears and mystery,
I cannot, Lord! Thy purpose see!
Yet will I give all praise to Thee.

February 26th.

DO *I keep before me the fact that if I have only one talent given me by my Lord, I am bound to use it for Him; and that, if I hide it in negligence, I shall ultimately have it taken from me, and be punished for its non-use?—*

Take therefore the talent from him . . . and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—Matt. xxv. 30.

GOD distributes His *gifts* according to His *good pleasure*; but bestows His *grace* according to our *faith*. If He has given me only one talent in anything, He had a reason for doing so, into which reason it would be impertinent for me to inquire. While that one talent distinguishes me from him that has five, it also distinguishes me from a brute which has none; that is, of the same kind. Instead, then, of *hiding* it, I ought to *use* it, and be thankful I have it to use. I am responsible for my one talent, as he who has five is for his. My one is enough for my ability, and if I wisely use it, will bring to me as good a welcome at last from the Master as the use of his five will to him. If I hide one, should I not have hid five, if I had had them? It is foolish to assign as a reason for hiding my one talent, that I cannot do as the five-talented man can. What should I think of a daisy that would not grow because it was not a lily, or of a sparrow that would not fly because it could not soar like a lark, or of a member of Parliament that would never speak because he could not speak as G., B., or C.?

While I see in the church those, who, on the ground that they cannot be this and do that, as others, do nothing, may I not be like them. May I look at what can be done by *me*, and do it in the best way I know how, so that at the last I may say to my Lord, "Thou deliveredst unto me one talent, behold I have gained one other talent beside it." Then shall I have the same approval as he who made his five into ten:—"Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Every man in his own place and order according to his gift and appointment from God; as every part of a machine in its place according to the plan of the inventor; as every individual thing in each section of the universe, created by Jehovah. Fulfil thy sphere, little or great, and thou art equal to an angel.

WHEREVER in the world I am, In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do For the Lord on whom I wait.

February 27th.

DO I ever meditate upon the wonderful love of God to me, and, as I do so, is my heart strangely warmed with love to Him in return?—

God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. v. 8.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—1 John iv. 9, 10.

SOME one has said that if the heaven was a parchment, every blade of grass a quill, and the ocean ink, there would not be parchment, pens, or ink enough with which to describe the greatness of God's love. And all this love to man in his sin and guilt, in his misery and woe. Though we are His enemies, He loves us that He may reconcile us to Himself. Though lost to Him through our waywardness, He seeks us in love to bring us back to His home. Though diseased and sick through our own misdoings, He loves us that He may heal us and make us whole. He commends His wisdom and power to us in His works, but He commends His love to us in His Son, Who Himself loved us and gave Himself for us. O wondrous love! O boundless grace!

A minister was once speaking of the *wonderful* love of God to a poor negress, when she exclaimed, "No wonder at all, massa; me tink it be just like Him." Yes, "God is love," and it is, therefore, just *like Him* to love us as He does.

Greater love than this is not in the universe. It is true, tender, changeless, free, unsought, everlasting, infinite. As I think of it, should it not flood my heart as the light of the sun floods my eyes when I open them? It ought to be an inspiration and a bliss evermore. It ought to be a constraining force in me to obey Him in all things. What enthusiasm should I feel to make it known! How should I aspire to have my whole being enswathed with its beatifying influences! How should every power of my existence be permeated with this pre-eminent excellence of God!

O infinite, boundless, eternal Love, absorb me into Thyself!

O LOVE, surpassing thought,
So bright, so grand, so clear, so true, so glorious;
Love infinite, love tender, love unsought,
Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious!
And this great love for us in boundless store;
God's everlasting love! What would we more?

February 28th.

THERE are several kinds of *zeal*—ignorant zeal, bitter zeal, proud zeal, partial zeal, Christian zeal. Which of these do I possess?—

They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.—Rom. x. 2.

But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts; glory not, and lie not against the truth.—Jas. iii. 14. See 2 Kings x. See also Matt. xxiii. 23.

The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.—Ps. lxi. 9.

ZEAL in the Christian religion, or in one's own salvation, is most commendable, because its objects are the highest and noblest. Without zeal a man can do little in religion or anything else. However much intelligence or education one may have, without zeal, he will do nothing tangible in the work of God. Bishop Latimer in his zeal did more for Christ than Cranmer, though he was not half the scholar. Baxter, though not equal to Owen or Manton in intellectual calibre, was more useful in saving souls from death. Wesley and Whitfield in some respects perhaps, were inferior to Butler and Watson, but far ahead of them in their zeal to spread the glorious gospel among the multitudes. Many laymen, in their zeal for God, have done more to bring men to the saving knowledge of Christ, than others who have had all the advantages of education, wealth, and position.

O for this fire of God in my soul, kindled not of bigotry or of rivalry, but of the Holy Ghost; fire which shall burn in me with intensest glow, not for self, not for sect, not for party, not for ritual, not for vain show of any kind, but for *the truth as it is in Jesus*. May zeal for this "eat me up." May I be "clad with this zeal as a cloak." May I be as a flaming seraph, doing God's will and showing forth His praise!

The "Acts of the Apostles" is the history of Christian zeal in its primitive purity, as kindled by the Holy Ghost, and as working in the first spread of Christianity. The history of the "Great Revival," in the last century, shows what the zeal of the Lord can do, when it has free course, under the inspirations of the spirit of wisdom, power, and sound mind. Men that are willing to "hazard their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus," are the "men that turn the world upside down," and do exploits for God.

IT is well to be *zealous*, for so were
Those of old who bore God's commission;
Their hearts burned like coals from the altar,
And they pressed toward the mark of their calling.
So do thou in thy sphere and station,
Spread the truth as it dwelleth in Jesus;
In season and out be thou instant;
Let thy *zeal* be according to knowledge.

February 29th.

IS my religion only a "Lord, Lord" religion, or is it one that delights to do the will of God?—

Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.—Matt. vii. 21-23.

FOR a child to say "Father, father," or a servant to say "Master, master," is quite right, but to *disobey* is quite wrong, and the right will not undo the wrong, but the wrong will nullify the right, so that the disobedient servant or child will deserve to be punished as if he had never said, "Father, father," or "Master, master,"

Saying "Lord, Lord" only, goes for nothing in the kingdom of God, because it is only *breath*; but *doing* the will of God brings its reward, because there are *will* and *heart* in it. There is no virtue in an automaton saying what it cannot help saying when set in motion, but a living man who speaks from thought and motive has the credit, at least, of speaking as a moral agent.

Saying "Lord, Lord" is what anyone can do who has the gift of speech, but no one can *do the will of God*, who has not that will in his heart, and who is not moved by a motive which agrees with the will that is done. The "Lord, Lord" automatic Christian shall not enter heaven, but he who from his mind and soul lovingly obeys Him.

Dear Lord, make me a *heart-Christian*. If up to now I have only been a *lip* one, in prayer and praise and life, let the time past suffice: and from this hour may I be one of Thy servants, whose *doings*, whatever his sayings are, shall be in righteousness and truth.

The "Lord, Lord" Christian only is "likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." But he that *does the will of God* is "like unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (Matt. vii. 24-27).

FROM all vain pomps and shows, from the pride that overflows,
And the craft of tongue and pen,—

Unto the simple thought by the Great Master taught,

And that remaineth still:

"Not he that repeateth the Name, but he that doeth the Will."

One Less at Home.

One less at home !

The charmed circle broken ; a dear face
Missed day by day from its accustomed place ;
But, cleansed and saved and perfected by grace,
One more in heaven !

One less at home !

One voice of welcome hushed, and evermore
One farewell word unspoken ; on the shore
Where parting comes not, one soul landed more,
One more in heaven !

One less at home !

A sense of loss that meets us at the gate ;
Within, a place unfilled and desolate ;
And far away our coming to await,
One more in heaven !

One less at home !

Chill as the earth-born mist the thought would rise,
And wrap our footsteps round and dim our eyes,
But the bright sunbeam darteth from the skies—
One more in heaven !

One more at home !

This is not home, where cramped in earthly mould,
Our sight of Christ is dim, our love is cold ;
But there, where face to face we shall behold,
Is home and heaven.

One more in heaven !

Another thought to brighten cloudy days,
Another theme for thankfulness and praise,
Another link on high our souls to raise
To home and heaven !

One more at home—

That home where separation cannot be,
That home where none are missed eternally ;
Lord Jesus, grant us all a place with Thee,
At home in heaven !

S. G. Stock.

Christian Warfare.

Soldier, go—but not to claim
Mouldering spoils of earth-born treasure,
Not to build a vaunting name,
Not to dwell in tents of pleasure.
Dream not that the way is smooth,
Hope not that the thorns are roses ;
Turn no wishful eye of youth,
Where the sunny beam reposes ;—
Thou hast sterner work to do,
Hosts to cut thy passage through :
Close behind thee gulfs are burning—
Forward?—there is no returning.

Soldier, rest—but not for thee
Spreads the world her downy pillow ;
On the rock thy couch must be,
While around thee chafes the billow :
Thine must be a watchful sleep,
Wearier than another's waking ;
Such a charge as thou dost keep
Brooks no moment of forsaking.
Sleep, as on the battle-field,
Girded—grasping sword and shield :
Those thou canst not name nor number
Steal upon thy broken slumber.

Soldier, rise—the war is done :
Lo, the hosts of hell are flying ;
'Twas thy Lord the battle won ;
Jesus vanquished them by dying.
Pass the stream—before thee lies
All the conquered land of glory ;
Hark !—what songs of rapture rise ;
These proclaim the victor's story.
Soldier, lay thy weapons down,
Quit the sword, and take the crown ;
Triumph !—all thy foes are banished,
Death is slain, and earth has vanished.

Charlotte Elizabeth.

Night.

Night is the time for rest ;
How sweet when labours close,
To gather round an aching breast
The curtain of repose ;
Stretch the tired limbs, and lay the head
Upon our own delightful bed !

Night is the time for dreams,
The gay romance of life,
When truth that is, and truth that seems,
Blend in fantastic strife :
Ah ! visions less beguiling far
Than waking dreams by daylight are !

Night is the time for toil,
To plough the classic field,
Intent to find the buried spoil
Its wealthy furrows yield ;
Till all is ours that sages taught,
That poets sang, or heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep,
To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of memory, where sleep
The joys of other years ;
Hopes that were angels in their birth,
But perish'd young, like things on earth !

Night is the time to watch
On ocean's dark expanse,
To hail the Pleiades, or catch
The full moon's earliest glance ;
That brings unto the home-sick mind
All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time to pray ;
Our Saviour oft withdrew
To desert mountains far away,
So will his followers do ;
Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
And hold communion there with God.

Night is the time for death,
When all around is peace,
Calmly to yield the weary breath
From sin and suffering cease ;
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends—such death be mine.

J. Montgomery

March 1st.

THERE are two great classes in the world—one that is seeking to practice truth and honesty in all things, the other seeking *SUCCESS* in any way and at any cost. To which of these do I belong?—

Able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.—Ex. xviii. 21.

He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.—Prov. x. 9.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.—Prov. xxi. 6.

Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.—Prov. xx. 17.

ON the side that is right and true before God may I always be found! Shall I, for the sake of worldly gain in any of its kinds, betray the principles of common honesty and honour? What is the value of *success* in anything if it be acquired by the loss of a good conscience and the favour of God? It is a poor business or profession that cannot be sustained by truth and righteousness. It is unworthy of the pursuit of *man*. He who follows it is more allied to the “father of lies” and the “god of this world” than to the God Who is “just and holy in all His ways.”

If I cannot obtain a livelihood, or office, or reputation, by fair and honourable means, rather let me dwell in obscurity and lowliness, yea, in poverty all my days. Better live and die an honest and true man, in the humblest condition of life, with conscience singing in its innocence, than live and die in the abundance of worldly riches and honours, obtained by unjust means, with conscience groaning under remorse and condemnation.

“In this world,” says Bernard, “is much treachery, little truth; here all things are traps; here everything is beset with snares; here souls are endangered, bodies are afflicted; here all things are vanity and vexation of spirit.” One needs, therefore, to be always on his guard in seeking *success*, lest he seek it in the way of the world and not in the way of God.

O God, by Thy almighty grace, make me an honest and righteous man before Thee, in myself and to myself, in Thy Church, and in all my business life!

BLEST, too, is he who can divine
Where real right doth lie,
And dares to take the side that seems
Wrong to man's blindfold eye.
Then learn to scorn the praise of men,
And learn to lose with God;
For Jesus won the world through shame,
And beckons thee His road.

March 2nd.

AS a son or daughter, do I honour, respect, love, and obey my parents, as is my duty and privilege?—

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.—Eph. vi. 1-3.

Cursed be he that setteth light by his father and mother.—Deut. xxvii. 16.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.—Col. iii. 20.

Despise not thy mother when she is old.—Prov. xxiii. 22.

He (Jesus) went down with them (His parents) and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.—Luke ii. 51.

WHETHER a child is young or old, if his parents are living, he is bound to respect and honour them; and in the Lord, to obey them. Years, many or few, do not affect this obligation. Nothing in time or circumstances can change the relation of parents and children. It is as sad to see a daughter or son, forty or fifty years old, dishonouring his parents, as it is to see one of ten or twelve; yea, more so. Who should receive so much respect and obedience from us as they who are, under God, the authors of our being? If our existence is worth anything to us, then we ought to love and honour them through whom we have received it.

In this, Jesus is a beautiful example. He consecrated filial obedience. In the anguish and sufferings of the Cross He lovingly thought of His mother, and gave her into the care of the disciple whom He loved. If He, the incarnation of divine wisdom, holiness, and power, was "subject unto them," how much more need has a child of sin and weakness to obey his parents?

I bless God that by His help I loved and obeyed my parents while living; and now that they are gone, I love and revere the memory of them. What I owed to their love, thought, prayers, and godly influence, I never paid, and never can. I will, however, cherish a grateful remembrance of them, and endeavour to hand down to my children the good which I received from them.

As now I have no earthly parents to honour and obey, help me, O Thou Parent of all, the more fully to honour and obey Thee!

WHILE subject to His mother, and while ruled
By human laws, Christ did His Father's will;
Like Him, may I on earth be trained and schooled
A heavenly Father's purpose to fulfil.
In those who rule me is God's power made known:
In those who love me is God's kindness shown.

March 3rd.

*A*MID the conflicting elements of thought, belief, and life in the Christian world, am I building on the one only Foundation, where I can rest in peace and stability?—

Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious : and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.—1 Peter ii. 6. Isa. xxviii. 16.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. ii. 11.

The foundation of God standeth sure.—2 Tim. ii. 19.

Upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—Matt. xvi. 18.

*A*S there are many minds, so there are many thoughts and opinions about religion, as about everything else. One opinion clashes with another opinion, one creed with another creed, one ritual with another ritual ; so that confusion and contradiction seem to reign everywhere in the religious world. If they are not all wrong, the spirit existing between them is not right. As I look on them I am confounded ; I am at a loss which to choose as the best. But when I turn from them and contemplate the divine revelation as given by Jesus Christ, I see the beauty, harmony, and force of Divine truth contained in Him. This leaves me without an alternative. This in all things has the pre-eminence. It commands my undivided faith and confidence. I prefer "the truth as it is *in* Jesus" to truth as taught by man, as contained in his systems and creeds. In doing this, I build my faith and hope on the Rock which abides rather than on the sand which shifts ; the Rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. Here I feel secure and invulnerable ; here I can be calm and rejoice, while those who are guided by human teachers only, are tossed about like a boat on a swelling sea without rudder or compass. They have no rest ; they can have none while subject to such conflicting and unsettled influences.

I cannot sufficiently praise God for giving me one, and only one, Foundation on which to build my belief and practice in the Christian life. On This may my goings be established !

O Thou Who changest not, the Everlasting Light, the Eternal Unity, the Infinite Truth, the All-knowing Mind, permit me still to abide with Thee and rest on Thee.

*F*XED on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay ;
This anchor shall my soul sustain
When earth's foundations melt away ;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.

March 4th.

HAVE I set up idols in my heart, which I worship, and whose counsel I obey?—

Thus saith the Lord God, Every man . . . that setteth up his idols in his heart . . . I the Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his idols . . . because they are estranged from me through their idols.—Ezra xiv. 4, 5.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.—1 John v. 21.

IT is a great mistake to imagine that there are no idols in the world but those in heathen temples. Alas, the greatest of all idols and the hardest to destroy are in human hearts. These idols, too, are the most costly, the most exacting, fastidious, and tyrannical. They have grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength. Missionaries are sent to China, India, and other places to convert the people from their idols. They find it hard work. Is it not harder to convert the idolaters at home? I question very much whether the idols in heathen temples are as offensive to God as those in Christian hearts. These idols, sometimes, actually claim the place of the living Jehovah. They are His rivals, set up by them who profess Him as their only Lord!

What is so sad to observe is that those in whose hearts these idols are set up, worship them in their own peculiar way; they consult them; as a rule they walk by the counsel they give; then they actually go and worship the living Jehovah, and ask Him for counsel, and help to live according to His will.

This worshipping of idols all the week and living as *they* direct, and then worshipping God on a Sunday from custom, God hates with a perfect hatred. He says that He will answer such worshippers only according to the multitude of idols that are in their hearts. He will not be to them the *living* God, but as a dumb idol.

Am I one of this number? Do I ask Jehovah to give me counsel how to live, and yet live according to the counsels of the idols which I have set up in my heart?

Thou, Who art God alone, show *me* how great and grievous is the sin of heart-idolatry in Thy sight.

TO thy worst self, sacrifice thyself!

For with thy worst self hast thou crowned thy god.
Thy god is far diffused in noble groves,
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing lawns,
And heaps of living gold that daily grow,
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries—
In such shape dost thou behold thy god.

March 5th.

HAVE I the spirit of Christian sympathy?—

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.—Rom. xii. 15.

Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.—1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. vi. 2.

We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.—Rom. xv. 1.

THE true spirit of Christian sympathy is contained in the above verses. Jesus exemplified it in the whole of His life. He does so still. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Many years ago a good and faithful minister, whose name was Oberlin, was labouring among the high Alps. On one occasion he was travelling on foot in the winter time. The snow was deep, and the weather very cold. Weary with his journey, faint and hungry, and overcome by the cold, he could not struggle any longer. He dropped on the snow and fell asleep. But he had not slept long before he was roused by some one shaking him, and calling to him.

A Swiss peasant saw him, as he was driving by in his sleigh. He gave him something to drink and to eat, lifted him into his sleigh, and drove him to the next village.

M. Oberlin felt that he owed his life to the sympathy of this stranger; and he offered him money, but he refused to take it.

"It is our duty to help one another," said the peasant, "and it is almost an insult to offer to pay a man for any such service."

"Well," replied Oberlin, "at least tell me your name, that I may tell it to the Lord in my prayers."

"I see you are a minister of the Gospel," said the peasant.

"Will you please tell me the name of the Good Samaritan?"

"I can't do that," said Oberlin, "for his name was never told."

"Then let my name go with his," was the peasant's reply: "we'll leave them both together with the Lord."

May this same spirit live in me, and be ready at every opportunity to show itself in word and deed! O what need there is for such a spirit in this world of suffering and sorrow!

I ASK Thee for a thoughtful love, through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles, and wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathize.

March 6th.

DO the hope and anticipation of better things to come, promised me by God in Jesus Christ, stimulate me to strive for their possession?—

We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.—Heb. vi. 11, 12.

We have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.—Jos. xviii. 9.

So run that ye may obtain.—1 Cor. ix. 24.

PROMISES awaken hope and anticipation: hope that the good things promised will be received, and anticipation of enjoying them when received. If the promises are *conditional*, the hope and anticipation act as incentives to comply with the conditions. Sometimes when the hope is realized the anticipation is disappointed. We had drawn so much happiness out of the things we hoped for by anticipation that when we came to them we did not find so much in them as we anticipated. This was not the fault of the things, but our fault. The promises were fulfilled exactly, and the hope also, but anticipation disappointed, because of its *excessive* views of the things promised.

Though this may apply to matters of time and sense, it will not apply to things of God. These, as promised by Him, will realize my hope, but *exceed* my anticipation. My heart *cannot* anticipate more pleasure in the blessings God has promised me, either on this side of heaven or in heaven itself, than they will yield. When I enter into their enjoyment, shall I not say, "The half was not told me nor anticipated by me?"

Hope and anticipation shall be my helpful companions on the way to heaven. When depression comes upon me I will hope in God that I shall yet praise Him, and I will anticipate the pleasure of His praise. In conflict I will hope for victory and anticipate the glory of victory. In the night of sorrow I will hope for the joy of the coming morn, and anticipate the sweetness of the joy. Anticipation shall encourage hope, and hope enliven anticipation, until both are consummated in the beatific vision.

GREEN pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free;
My Saviour keeps my treasure,
And soon He'll give it me.

March 7th.

HAVE I such confidence in the love of God in Christ as assures me that nothing in the events and circumstances of life shall separate me from it?—

I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. viii. 38, 39.

THE love of God cannot be separated from me, but I may be separated from the love of God. God's love to me is stronger than all the forces of evil engaged against me, but are not they stronger than my love to God? The prodigal's conduct could not destroy his father's love to him, but it destroyed his love to his father: and not until certain circumstances awoke again a spark of love to his father did he arise and return to him, in hope that the old love of his parent remained and would receive him again to home and favour.

God's love to me is indestructible. O may my love to Him be everlasting! I am sure His love will make many excuses for the weakness of my love to Him. But God forbid that on this account I should make excuses. I have need to ask His forgiveness for my failings, and so to foster and guard my love to Him, until I shall have almost as strong an assurance that my love will abide even as His will.

A good minister of the Lord Jesus in his old age was blind. As he lay on his dying bed he called one of his daughters to his side, and asked her to bring the New Testament. "Open," he said, "at Romans eight." "Now," said he, "put my finger on the 38th verse. Now read, 'For I am persuaded, &c.'"
She read to the end of the chapter; meantime his spirit entered into the joy of his Lord.

What a blessed persuasion is this, that God's love is unfailing! It rests on His word of promise, on His work of redemption and grace in Jesus Christ, on what He *has* done for me and *is* now doing *in* me, on the experience of His people in all ages. I am not more assured that I live, that I have the use of my senses, than I am of the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. "He that hath this full assurance of faith," says Trapp, "goes gallantly to heaven." Latimer says "This assurance is the sweet meats of the feast of a good conscience. There are other dainty dishes in this feast, but this is the banquet."

I WILL love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath,
And say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

March 8th.

AM I sufficiently awake to the nature and designs of Satan's temptations, and do I at all times watch and pray lest I fall into them?—

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.—Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.—Matt. xxvi. 41.

Lead us not into temptation.—Matt. vi. 13.

AS is the burning candle to the moth and the spider's web to the fly, so are Satan's temptations to the Christian. Satan is wonderfully skilful in adapting himself to times, circumstances, and characters. "If he meets with a proud man," says an old writer, "he flatters him; if with a covetous man, he comes with gold in his hand. He hath an apple for Eve, a grape for Noah, a change of raiment for Gehazi, a bag for Judas; he can dish out his meat for all palates; he hath a 'last' to fit every shoe."

My safety is in meeting his vigilance with my watchfulness, his subtilty with divine wisdom, his lies with Christ's truth; in keeping close to my Captain's side, and in never letting my *faith give way*. In respect to this, may I always remember that as I hold fast my faith there is the Great High Priest in the heavens praying for me that it fail not.

It is said that Satan once tempted Bonaventura to believe that he was a reprobate, and to persuade him to drink his fill of the pleasures of this life, because he was sure to lose those of the other. But Bonaventura replied, "No, not so, Satan; if I must not enjoy God *after* this life is over, let me enjoy Him as much as I can *in* this life."

I must never think myself secure against temptations. If I have none from within I have them from without. If I have none to-day I may have some to-morrow. The enemy is always watching for his opportunity, and I am always susceptible. Alone, or in company, in my business or in my devotions, I am not free from danger. I will, therefore, both watch and pray.

O Thou Who wast tempted in all points as I am, yet without sin, do Thou give me Thy grace as I need it, so that I fall into no temptation nor any kind of evil!

WHY should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.
Against me earth and hell combine,
But on my side is power divine:
Jesus is all, and He is mine!

March 9th.

DO I live, according to my knowledge and grace, consistently and circumspectly before the ungodly with whom I have to do in the affairs of this life?—

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.—Col. iv. 5.

See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.—Eph. v. 15.

AS a Christian, I have a rule to live and to work by. If I live and work by that I am “wise” and not a “fool.” The world has not given me this rule, but my Master, Who is in heaven: therefore I am not to live to please the world, but Him Whose I am and Whom I serve. If I live as *He* tells me, I need not care for anything the world may say about me. My interests are in His hands, and to Him I am alone responsible. To please Him and to be accepted of Him must be my supreme concern and my highest joy. To keep Christ’s word, even to the extremity of it, must be my aim. Like one that walks on a tight rope, I must take care that I make no false step, lest I fall to my injury.

I have seen two men walking on a road: one staggered and stumbled, as though at every step he would fall. The other man, being sober, walked with head erect, steps firm, and straight as the road itself. Thus must I walk as a Christian, without going to the right or left, not staggering with doubts and fears, not tripping or stumbling, as though I had no strength or self-control.

One way of walking in wisdom toward them that are without is “redeeming the time,” buying up and saving every moment of every hour and every hour of every day, and using it to the best advantage for both worlds. In this we may set an example to many around us, who foolishly fritter away time in ways which are neither profitable to themselves nor to others. How strange that any one should be so prodigal in the use of that of which he should be most covetous.

“Real Christians” says Leighton “walk warily in the world as a man or woman, neatly apparelled, would do amongst a multitude that are sullied and besmeared.”

But, Lord, how can I walk thus unless Thou uphold me with the right hand of Thy righteousness, and guide me with Thy free Spirit, “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not” (Ps. xvii. 5).

SUPERIOR sense may I display
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March 10th.

HAVE *I strength and courage to do my duty under all circumstances?*—

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.—1 Cor. xvi. 13.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.—Eph. vi. 10.

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. ii. 1.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord.—Ps. xxvii. 14.

MAY I not be a coward and fly before my enemies! With the armour of God on me, with God by me, with angels as my servants, with truth and all true people on my side, what have I to fear? It is not for me to flee, but, if needs be, fight the good fight of faith—the battles of the Lord—and die rather than fly: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong.” I must neither “fear nor be faint-hearted” (Isa. vii. 4).

When affliction overtakes me, I must not complain, but accept it as a means appointed by God for my improvement in His grace. I must look disappointment in the face and brave it out in His Name, Who is true and righteous altogether. If I see nothing come of my serving God, I must not give up, but like the sower, sow in hope. If others fail, why should I? If that brother yields to the fear of man, should I do the same? I must obey my Lord and my conscience, whatever difficulties and discouragements meet me. If I go on I shall go forward. I must believe, though I cannot see. If the duties of my calling in life are distasteful, I must attend to them as under the eye of my Master Who is in heaven. I must train my children for Jesus, although few signs of good results may follow to my sight. I must let my light shine, even if others do not see it and glorify their Father on account of it. “Cast thy bread on the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.”

I will seek inspiration for my courage in the examples of Prophets and Apostles. They all courageously endured afflictions, sufferings, rebuffs, to which mine are trifles. Craft, violence, and every form of evil combined to turn them aside, but they kept right on to the end, and are now at rest.

Almighty God, grant that I may be a true follower of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.

INBORN courage,

The generous child of fortitude and faith,
Holds its firm empire in the constant soul! *
And like the stedfast pole-star, never once
From the same fixed and faithful point declines.

March 11th.

AM I ever so situated as to be required to fear and obey man rather than God? How do I act in such a case?—

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him Which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.—Matt. x. 28.

I will not fear what man shall do unto me.—Heb. xiii. 6.

The fear of man bringeth a snare.—Prov. xxix. 25.

Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings. Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?—Isa. li. 7, 12, 13.

HEZEKIAH at one time feared the king of Syria so much that he seemed to forget his God, and was ensnared by him. Sir Matthew Hale was a man of such conscientious integrity, such unvarying rectitude, such high-minded devotion to God, that he feared no man as against his duty to his Maker, not even the mighty Cromwell nor the dread Charles. Latimer, Luther, Knox, were equally fearless of frowning kings and lords. Thus it was with Nehemiah ; in the fear of God, he would neither do as others did, or as they did not do, because of man's promises or his threats. And when he was urged to flee to the Temple to save himself, he said, "Should such a man as I flee? I will not."

To fear man under any circumstances more than God or even as much, is placing man before God, is to entangle ourselves in snares difficult to get away from, is to put ourselves under power which will hold us as menials.

As man with man I am equal. I should no more fear him than he me. I will love and respect him as he is bound to love and respect me. *Fear* him I will not, because of his riches, his wisdom, his power, his threats. I will exalt no man above man, and fear no man whose Father is my Father, whose home is my home. I will fear Him Whose I am and Whom I serve, in Whose hands is my breath, Who is able to destroy and to save ; yea, I will fear Him, though not with the fear of a slave, but of an obedient child.

Who or what need I stand in fear of, while I love and trust Thee, Almighty Creator and Preserver of the universe? Thou art my security against any harm that may threaten me.

I HAVE not feared Thee as I ought,
Nor bowed beneath Thine awful eye,
Nor guarded deed, and word, and thought ;
Remembering that my God was nigh,
Lord, give me faith to know Thee near,
And grant the grace of holy fear.

March 12th.

WHEN my spirit is overwhelmed within me, and my heart is desolate with grief, where do I go to find suitable relief: to God or to human resources?—

If thou prepare thy heart, and stretch out thine hands toward Him, thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.—Job xi. 13, 16.

When my heart is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.—Ps. lxi. 2.

Is any afflicted, let him pray.—Jas. v. 13.

NOTHING is more natural than to fly to earthly friends for help and comfort in our troubles; and nothing is so *disappointing*. Asa, diseased in his feet, went to the physicians and found no relief. Job's friends came to comfort him, and he said to them, "Miserable comforters are ye all." The afflicted woman in the Gospel spent all her living with doctors, and became worse rather than better.

So it is, all human succour fails to give healing to our broken hearts and rest to our burdened souls. True, it is our privilege to weep with them that weep as well as to rejoice with them that rejoice; but it is our mistake to go no farther. After all our brother's help and sympathy, we are still desolate, until we go to the consoling, sympathising, supporting God. In Him we find a solace, which, like that of a mother's to her weeping child, dries up our tears, and lays our broken hearts on His tender loving breast. In Him the "fatherless findeth mercy."

"Is God dead?" asked a good wife of her husband, who was much depressed at some event which had occurred. "Dead! God cannot die," he replied. "Then why, dear husband, do you not go to Him for comfort, which He alone can give?"

I am free to confess that I have been too much like that husband. But how unbelieving! How inconsistent! I will do so no more, the Lord being my helper. Why should I? To whom should I go for succour and help if not to God? Are not His resources infinite? Does not He love me with an undying affection? He looks for me to come to Him for comfort in my trials. He invites me: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee; and thou shalt glorify Me."

O, my Divine Father, may I in all my distresses fly to Thee!

I BRING my grief to Thee,
The grief I cannot tell;
No words shall needed be,
Thou knowest all so well.
I bring the sorrow laid on me,
O, suffering Saviour, now to Thee!

March 13th.

HAVE I the disposition which seeks to find out the good in anyone rather than the evil?—

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.—1 Peter iv. 8.

Love one another with a pure heart fervently.—1 Peter i. 22.

Wherefore laying aside . . . all evil speaking.—1 Peter ii. 1.

THERE are two ways of looking at my brother as there are of looking at any object. I may look to find all the evil I can in him, that I may see what good remains; or I may look to find all the good, that I may see his evil. These two ways bring me to the same end. The chief thing is, How do I proceed to make use of what I have discovered? If the evil, do I magnify it in speaking of it to others? If the good, do I speak of that to others, and leave the evil alone? Does my charity cover his sins, and lay bare his goodness?

In dealing with my brother *himself*, do I scold or denounce him for the evil I see in him, and perhaps irritate and make him worse? Or, do I let *that* alone, and remind him of what is favourable in him and stimulate him to foster it? Do I help him in this, so that by the strengthening of good within him his evil may be overcome? He may then seek from God that which I cannot give him and he cannot give himself, viz., a new heart and a right spirit.

How much more charitable to follow this course than the opposite. My brother is not as an article in trade to be examined for his *defects*, and dealt with accordingly. It is as easy to notice his good qualities and consider him, as it is his bad ones. Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, had his failings, but the Lord said, "All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him . . . because *in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.*" My brother must be indeed a sad specimen of human nature if there is *no* good thing in him, even though it may be concealed. One man has a way of hiding his good and exposing his evil; another man shows his good and hides his evil. I must not be hasty in judging in either case. However I may judge, I shall always be on the Christian side when I search for his better self and encourage him, and help him against his worse self, to improve him all round.

O Father, grant me grace to deal with others as I would have them deal with me!

A LOVE that gives and takes—that seeth faults,
Not with flaw-seeking eyes like needle-points,
But loving kindly ever looks them down
With the o'ercoming faith of meek forgiveness!

AS a member of the body—the Church—do I take any part in the mutual edification of my fellow-members?—

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.—Jude xx. 21.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.—1 Thess. v. 11.

Even as I please men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved.—1 Cor. x. 33.

UNION, communion, fellow-helping, fellow-working, are principles on which the universe is built, and each division of it. Nothing exists in isolation. One thing is connected with another by affinity and sympathy, and work together for beneficent ends. The same principles may be seen in societies, guilds, clubs, federations, which exist in the world of mankind. The human body, in its variety of members, but unity of co-operation, illustrates the same principle.

What I see in the natural and social world I see in the Church. I am a member of the body of Christ—the Church; and others are associated with me. We are bound together in and by the one Spirit, the one faith, the one baptism, and have the one Lord as our Head. In the members making this oneness there may not be equality any more than in the various members of my one body; but, like them, we are dependent one on the other. As one member of my body helps other members of my body, so I, as a member of the Church, ought to help other members as they help me. Not to do so is selfishness, which may result in more loss to me than to the body. If I give I shall receive. If I help to build others up they will unite to build me up. So the fellow-feeling and helping will result in the edification of all.

I fear that I have suffered spiritual loss by not availing myself of more Christian fellowship with God's people. Is my faith as strong, my hope as bright, my love as warm, my zeal as ardent, my life as consistent, as they would have been had I received more edification from my fellow-members of the Church? Then, again, by absenting myself from their company in communion, ought I not to ask, Have I not deprived them of what they had a right to expect from me? If I have any religion at all, surely there is some experience in it, which, if made known to others, would be of service to them. How do I know but some soul is languishing through my *selfishness*?

HELP us to build each other up, Our little stock improve,
Increase our faith, confirm our hope, And perfect us in love.

March 15th.

I*S the spirit of prayer within me in such a degree that I can in any frame of mind, and under any circumstances, pray to God with a calm, collected, awakened soul?—*

Pray without ceasing.—1 Thes. v. 17.

He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke xviii. 1.

I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting holy hands without wrath and doubting.—1 Tim. ii. 8.

Continuing instant in prayer.—Rom. xii. 12.

“**I** GIVE myself unto prayer,” said the Psalmist. One who does this may be thought to have the *habit* of prayer. But the habit of prayer may be acquired without the *spirit* of prayer; so that one may pray for a particular person after he is dead without knowing it, from the habit of having prayed for him so many years while he lived.

What I desire is not such a habit of prayer as shall be no more than machine-praying. I want the *spirit* of prayer to *live* in me, so that I can pray anywhere and at any time, with or without the form, in any posture, circumstances or associations; as Abraham for Sodom, as Elijah on Carmel, as David in the horrible pit, as Jonah in the whale’s belly, as Nehemiah in a king’s court, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel in prison, as Hezekiah on a bed of sickness, as Jesus on the mountain top and in the garden, as Paul by the river side, as Luther in his cell, as martyrs at the stake, as Wesley or Whitfield in the open air. So that, if needs be, I can pray in the market, behind the counter, in the crowd, in my closet, in my family.

With this spirit of prayer agrees God’s relation to prayer. He hears true prayer without respect to form, place, time, person, or language. He is not like an earthly king, to be approached only in certain prescribed ways, to which only a few can conform. “Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” There is no respect of persons with Him. “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” As the omnipresent God, He can hear prayer everywhere. As the omnipotent God, He can answer prayer beyond all our asking or thinking. As the omniscient God, He knows all we need before we ask, yet will He be inquired of that He may do them for us.

Lord help me, and teach me how to pray.

PRAYER is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air;
His watchword in the hour of death,
He enters heaven with prayer.

March 16th.

UNDER the pressure of certain influences, is not my mind led to think of spiritual and eternal things? but when that pressure ceases, does it not revert to its old way of thinking according to this world?—

When he slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and inquired after God; and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they did but flatter Him with their mouths, and they lied unto Him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant.—Ps. lxxviii. 34-37.

EXCITEMENT of any kind is almost sure to be followed by a corresponding reaction. Swing the pendulum too far one side; it will rebound too far on the other. Put too much pressure on the mind or body, and dejection will be the result.

So it is in spiritual things. I have known a brother, whose custom was to be irregular in his observance of the means of grace and family prayers, because of his undue attention to worldly things. Under certain special church services, or when he heard a pathetic and powerful sermon, or when some afflictive dispensation visited him or his family, he would form new resolves, go on a new line of practice, and, in fact, one would think he had indeed passed through some elevating change in his spiritual life. But in the course of a brief period, when the pressure of the times and seasons had gone, he would fall back into his former habits and customs. "The river past and God forgotten."

This is an unenviable experience. It is too weather-like, too Ephraim-like; I do not covet it. I prefer steady growing life; a daily getting better and better under the unflinching influences of truth and grace; the abiding operations of the Spirit within, working out my salvation with fear and trembling.

This is the most sure and reliable growth in Christian life. "Fits and starts" do not harmonize with the rooting, the grounding, the steadfastness, the constancy, which are characteristics of the religion of Him Who is the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This is the true grace of God, in which if I live daily I shall realize a steady and safe progress towards "the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul."

THOSE fervent raptures are for ever flown,
Yet cease I not to struggle and aspire
Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags
Through sinful choice.

March 17th.

SHOULD I complain of the darkness and ignorance in which I walk, as regards God and His ways towards me?—

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?—Isa. xl. 27.

Clouds and darkness are round about Him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.—Ps. xcvi. 2.

We see through a glass darkly.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Wherefore doth a living man complain?—Lam. iii. 39.

IT is not usual for a father to make known to his child *why* and *wherefore* he pursues such and such a course towards him; nor is it proper for the child to inquire of him; much less is it becoming for the child to complain that his father does not inform him. The proper conduct for a child is to trust his father's intelligence, love, and wisdom to do what is right. If the father's way is hid from his child, it is not hid from himself. If the child knows not now all he would like, by waiting he may know all that will satisfy him.

These thoughts apply to God in His dealings with His people. We live in mysteries. We know not the way He takes. Who can find out the Almighty to perfection? He is in Himself and in His dispensations, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible; what then? Shall I complain, and say I ought to know more of Him and His ways? *I know He is my Father*; I know He is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. Is not this enough? Should I find fault with Him because He does not reveal to me more of the mysteries of His ways? It would be unbecoming of me to do so. Doubtless I know all that is proper for me to know. How can I, as a child under tuition and discipline, expect to understand things as I shall when I am of full age? Samuel, as a child, ministered unto the Lord, and knew Him not; but the time came when the Lord revealed Himself unto Samuel: then he served Him in the light of truth and love. May I patiently wait and do my duty, and what I know not now I shall know hereafter.

Blessed Father, I will trust Thee for what I know not of Thee and Thy ways, and praise Thee for what I know.

SUBMISSIVE would I kiss the rod,
Needful each stroke I humbly own;
Or let me trust Thee, O my God!
If now the need to me unknown.

Soon shall Thy dealings be unrolled,
The wondrous chart will fix my gaze,
And heaven's revolving years unfold
New themes for wonder and for praise.

March 18th.

AS a steward of gifts and graces with which God has entrusted me, am I faithful in my use of them ?—

It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.—1 Cor. iv. 2.

Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.—1 Peter iv. 9, 10.

A CERTAIN nobleman had occasion to leave England for Australia. Before going, he called his steward into his presence and told him of his intended departure. He left all in the steward's charge, giving him directions as to the chief things he had to mind, and leaving him to follow his own judgment as to others. The nobleman was away two or three years, and when he returned he found the steward had been faithful in following his directions, and had acted satisfactorily in the things respecting which he had left him to judge for himself.

Thus has my Lord done with me. He has given me certain rules by which to live as regards certain things in life; in regard to others not of such importance, He has left me to follow that course which I may best judge to be in harmony with His will.

How am I proceeding in respect to both? Is it my prayer and endeavour in the first to be faithful in doing as He has directed? In the others, am I acting wisely and discreetly, so as to give in a good account to Him when He shall appear? In either case I must wait till He come to know whether I have fulfilled my trust so as to have His commendation or condemnation.

My conduct as a "good steward of the manifold grace of God" entrusted to me, will depend upon my *heart*. If that is right in its nature, its principles, its affections towards Him, I shall be faithful in the least as also in much. I shall not take advantage of His absence or invisibility to serve my own interests. One may have the Word of God in his hands to guide him, but that is not enough. A man may have a yard rod and make short measure, or a pound weight and give short weight; but if a man is true in himself, he will do justly in all things and at all times.

O God, make my heart right and keep it right, then shall I be faithful and not fear the day of reckoning.

MY faithfulness I cannot see, my goodness is unknown to me,
And be it, Lord, unknown;
So Thou, the Giver of all grace, in that great day Thy servant praise
For what Thyself hast done.

March 19th

HAS my soul, so long in unrest, found that peace which Jesus left as a legacy to His people?—

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.—John xiv. 27.

These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace. John xvi. 33.

When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble.—Job xxxiv. 29.

PEACE follows war, calm a storm, harmony confusion. So have I seen the passions, interests, and opinions of men rise in conflict until fear and terror have seized the public mind, not knowing what was to be the consequences. But the time came when the points in question were settled, and after a short swelling of the waters calmness followed.

So, with me, I have felt the opposing, the conflicting elements within. Doubt opposed faith, and faith doubt; fear struggled with hope, and hope with fear; appetite fought with temperance, and temperance with appetite, until I felt that my inner life was nothing but strife, commotion, and uncertainty. I sought rest in this, that, and the other; but it came not. At last I saw One walking on the troubled waters in the midst of the storm, Who said, "Peace, be still!" Instantly the wind ceased to blow in hurricane, the waters ceased to roll in fury; there was a calm!

What an unspeakable blessing is *peace*! Could the Saviour have left a more valuable legacy to His people? He commended His spirit to His Father. He bequeathed His body to Joseph. The soldiers took His garments. He left His mother in charge of John. To His disciples He gave HIS PEACE. This is a treasure beyond all earthly calculation or parallel. To live in His peace is to live as He lived, and to die in His peace is to die like Him, conqueror of death and hell. "I die happy," said a dying Christian, "having the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." "I would give," said another in dying, "ten thousand worlds, if I had them, to have peace with God." Such is the difference in the hour of death between one with Christ's peace and one without it!

May I *live*, O Jesus, in the enjoyment of Thy peace, and at the last find that it makes my dying bed feel "soft as downy pillows are."

"PEACE" was the word our Saviour breathed,
When from our world His steps withdrew;
The gift He to His friends bequeathed,
With Calvary and the Cross in view.

March 20th.

AM I as yet only a "servant" to Christ, with no other privilege than to work for Him; or am I His "friend," with higher and more blessed associations and honours?—

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.—John xv. 13-15.

TO be the servant of a king is no small honour, but to be a friend, that is more. The two may meet in the same person, but not necessarily. That depends upon the judgment of the monarch. The late Lord Beaconsfield was for a time only a servant of the Queen, but in his latter years he was both servant and friend.

Thus it was with the disciples. Up to a period they were Christ's servants only, but "henceforth," He says, "I call you not servants, but friends." They were still servants, but He did not call them so. He had drawn them nearer to His confidence and love, and so near that He called them by the name which indicated this, although they yet served in doing His will.

There are those now who have attained no higher relationship to Jesus than *servants* in some one or more departments of His kingdom. They are only recognized and dealt with as such. Some are higher, some lower in service. Some are faithful, others unfaithful. However, they all serve.

Others there are, who, while servants, are *friends* also. They have so entered into sympathy with His interests, have drunk in so much of His Spirit, have so given up their love and confidence to Him, that He has taken them into *His* love and confidence. They know His *secrets*; they now serve as *friends*. What they do is not from a *sense of duty* nor for *wages*, but to please Him whose friends they are, and Who Himself is their Friend.

As a friend of Jesus, may I show myself friendly by delighting to be in His company and holding fellowship with Him. May I prove myself His friend by being faithful to His service, by speaking well of Him, by never betraying Him or His cause, by being even willing to die for Him, if needs be, as He Himself died for me.

O Jesus, who am I that I should be the friend of my Lord?

TO be Thy servant, Lord,
Is my delight and joy;
To be Thy friend and hear Thy word,
It lifts my soul on high.

March 21st.

DO I think my lot a hard one because it is one of toil and comparative poverty, while there are so many around me in affluent circumstances?—

Men of the world, which have their portion in this life.—Ps. xvii. 14.

These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches.—Ps. lxxiii. 12.

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and my cup; Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.—Ps. xvi. 5, 6.

INEQUALITY in the occupations and conditions of mankind is as marked as it is in the vegetable and animal world. Why it is, who can explain? *Could* there be *equality* in these any more than in the members of the human body, or in the different parts of a watch? May not the hands complain that they are worse off than the ears, the feet than the eyes, the stomach than the head, seeing these have so much more to do than they?

My lot, I know, is different from that of others. I work hard and have small wages. I live in a cottage, and fare on scanty provisions. I have little to look for but toil all my life, and at last to rest in a poor man's grave. What then? I see many that are lower in the system than I am. My lot is not of my choice. I am where the Great Maker saw fit to place me, as a builder thinks proper to place one stone prominently in an arch, while another he places out of sight in the foundation. Is not this as important in its place as the other? True, it is hid, but it is not so exposed to the changes of seasons, nor to the chances of destruction. If I have not riches, I have not their dangers. If I am obscure, I have not the responsibilities of publicity. My heavenly Father does not think the pomps, and shows, and wealth of this world good enough for me. So he allows the lower grade of moral kind to have them. To me He gives what they have not—a good conscience, a happy home, a joyous heart, a treasure of grace now and a prospect of a treasure of glory by and bye. In one word, He gives me *Himself*. Hallelujah!

What the men of this world have will be taken from them, or they from it, but I have "that good part which shall never be taken away from me." My "inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away."

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord, for choosing mine inheritance for me!

I ENVY not their hap whom fortune doth advance:

I take no pleasure in their pain that have less happy chance,
To rise by other's fall I deem a losing game;

All states with others' ruin built, to ruin run amain.

March 22nd.

HAVE I now that measure of simple confidence in Jesus and love to Him which I felt when I first gave my heart to Him?—

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.—Heb. iii. 14.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.—Rev. iii. 21.

IT is pleasing to see husband and wife at the age of seventy or more, after having lived together fifty years, passing through many scenes of conflict, trials, and affliction, still enjoying the same simple, pure love which first drew them together.

So it is in the case of a Christian, who, after many years of temptations in the wilderness, retains the same unshaken confidence in Christ which he had when he first believed. There, in the heart of him, is the same hold of Jesus as at first. Of such it cannot be said, as of the church at Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy first love."

I have need to be watchful of my first love, that it die not under the influences of this world. "Backsliding," says Jonathan Edwards, "is a disease that is exceedingly secret in its working. It is a flattering distemper; it works like a consumption, wherein persons often flatter themselves that they are not worse, but something better, and in a hopeful way of recovery, till a few days before they die."

The Rev. T. Collins, in his life, speaks of an old disciple, who at the age of ninety retained her first faith and love unshaken. "The text, as she said, *given to her* in the day of her adoption, was Ps. ciii. 12, 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.' Through *seventy* years that word remained the gem of her memory. It never lost its power to awaken her praise. It acted as a spell, even amid the decays of failing nature. I never quoted it without feeling I had the key of her heart."

May my evidence of acceptance with God grow stronger and stronger as my years advance. If, as I get old my surroundings change, and the *blaze* of love and the *activities* of life shall *weaken*, may the fire within *glow* and burn as of yore.

Blessed Lord! As I come nearer to the vision of Thyself, may my devotion to Thee intensify and strengthen.

As years roll on, and times and seasons go,
And one by one depart of them I know
May my first love to Thee remain the same
As when I first believed in Thy Dear Name.

March 23rd.

WHAT are the great essentials of a Godly life? and do I possess and practice them?—

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.—Micah vi. 8.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—1 Sam. xv. 2.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.—Ecc. xii. 13.

IF a coin, called a sovereign, has not within it enough of the element that makes it genuine, its form, its appearance, its image and superscription do not make it so. The thing essential to fire is heat, and to honey sweetness, and without these there is no fire and no honey.

The same applies to Religion. To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, are its *essentials*. Without these, all its forms, and names, all its faith and professions, all its praises and prayers, and even Jesus Christ Himself, are not religion before God. Faith without works is dead, forms without the Spirit are dead also. Jesus Christ, without practical godliness, is only a name. Not every one that saith, "Lord, Lord" is a Christian, but he that *doeth the will* of God from the heart, And what is that, but to do "justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?"

If I am unjust to my neighbour, or my servant, or my children; in my trade, or in my family; if I am cruel to my beast, or to my fellow; if I am tyrannical, unforgiving, censorious, covetous, unthankful; if I am proud, austere, overbearing, resist God in my spirit, and lift myself above Him and my equals, what are all my saying prayers, my repeating creeds, my going to church, my reading the Bible, but respectable counterfeits and deceptions? If I test them, they want the right *ring*, because they need the *essentials*. God refuses to accept them, as a tradesman refuses coins which he finds to be spurious.

Justice, mercy, and humility are beautiful as taught in ethics; but how much more so as taught in the light of the Gospel, and exemplified in the perfect life of the God-man! They are admirable as *lessons* to study or to observe; but it is in the Christian practice of them in daily life that, like the sun, they shine in full glory, and shed their benedictions on all around.

GOD in His word to me has shown
What He of me demands,—
To do His will, His law to own,
Obey what He commands.

March 24th.

WHAT am I that the eternal God should be so mindful of me?—

Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?—2 Sam. vii. 18

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant.—Gen. xxxii. 10.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?"—Ps. viii. 4.

Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.—Job x. 12.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.—Eph. iii. 8.

WHEN David told Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, that he would show kindness to him for his father's sake, and restore to him all the lands of Saul, his grandfather, and that he should eat bread at his table continually, Mephibosheth fell before David in reverence and wonder, saying, "What is thy servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" And David said unto him, "Fear not." (2 Sam. ix.)

Such is *my* feeling as I appear before my sovereign Lord, and contemplate all He *has* done for me, *is* doing for me, and has *promised* to do for me. "How is it? Why is it?" I ask myself. I, a sinner by birth and by life, a sinner of such magnitude, persistence, and obstinacy; a sinner in the depths of my being; a sinner before God, far, far more than I am before men. Why has He given His Son to die for me; given *me* a new nature; given *me* His Holy Spirit to guide me in life and help me in prayer, to teach me His truth, and to sanctify my heart? Why has he taken *me* into His house, and given *me* a place at His table? Why has He made *me* His heir, and willed to *me* a heavenly inheritance? He Himself must give the answer, I cannot:—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

Ah! This explains it. *He loves me*. I see now it is all love on His side. His love saw me in my sins. His love redeemed me. His love saved me. His love has done it all. What wonders love can do! But it is only infinite love in an infinite Father that could do these things. O, for such love may my heart swell with endless praise!

Lord God, this is not the way of man; but Thy ways *are* not as man's ways; nor Thy thoughts as man's thoughts.

WHAT am I, O Thou glorious God,
And what my father's house to Thee?
That Thou such mercies hast bestowed
On me, the chiefest sinner, me!
I take the blessings from above,
And wonder at Thy boundless love!

March 25th

IN reviewing my Christian life, do I take in all my sins and shortcomings, or do I look only at the bright side?—

These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.—
Matt. xxiii. 23.

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.—Luke xvii. 10.

THE duty of prayer well done cannot atone for the neglect of praise, nor can faith take the place of obedience. A man may resist the temptation to drink, but that is no excuse for his yielding to bad temper; one besetting sin may be laid aside, but that is no apology for retaining another. If a man build a house and leave even the back door wanting, the house is not finished. We must be faithful not only in the great but in the small things of religion. A mother once left home and gave charge to her servant to keep things cleanly and orderly in her absence, *and especially to look after her child.* When she returned she found the child had been looked after, but the house was both disorderly and unclean. The servant's attention to the child did not make up for her neglect of the house. To plead the doing of one thing as excuse for neglecting another in religion is Pharisaism, and this is one of the worst of sins before Christ.

There is no merit in doing my duty, as I only do what I ought; but if I neglect any part of it, I am for that liable to punishment. Duty done, then, will not merit heaven, but sin committed, either by omission or commission, will expose me to ruin. I am an *unprofitable* servant when I neglect my duty; and when I have done *all* the things commanded me of God, I have only done that which I ought. God knows what I can do, and requires no more, and everything I do, even though it be fully perfect, is only what He has a right to expect. My salvation, then, is not of the *merit* of doing my duty. *It is of God's mercy in Jesus Christ*, as was Paul's, Wesley's and all the blood-washed multitudes before the Throne. "Salvation is of the Lord."

I am free to confess that I have too often thought that what I have done in one way so freely and faithfully may in the day of the Lord be a sort of "make up" for my shortcomings in other respects. Delusion!

I HAVE not served Thee as I ought;
Alas! the duties left undone,
The work so coldly, feebly wrought,
The battles lost, or scarcely won!
Lord, give the zeal and give the might,
For Thee to toil, for Thee to fight.

March 26th.

ALTHOUGH I may not be considered one of the "wise" and "prudent" of this world, yet, may I not claim to know, as taught by the Lord, what many of them know not, and which their wisdom never will reveal to them?—

I know that my Redeemer liveth.—Job. xix. 25.

I know if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,—1 Cor. v. 1.

I know Whom I have believed.—2 Tim. i. 12.

One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.—John ix. 25.

We know that we are passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.—1 John iii. 14.

ALL thy children shall be taught of the Lord." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." This secret the Lord teaches only His children, as such. Intellect may find out things on a level with itself in art, science, and philosophy without the Lord's teaching. Beyond its province it cannot go. It may dive into the mysteries of Nature, but not into the mysteries of the Gospel. A microscope can reveal the small things of the insect world, but it cannot scan the heavens and unfold its marvellous wonders.

I may not know Latin, Greek, or Hebrew; I may be ignorant of Mathematics, Algebra, Geology, Astronomy; but I bless God I know that my sins are forgiven, that I have passed from death unto life, that when Christ shall appear I shall be like Him, that I have peace with God, that I have a hope of heaven, that there is no want to them that fear the Lord. I know Whom I have believed. I know my Redeemer liveth. Knowing such things as these is to me greater joy than to know all that human wisdom could teach. I would not object to be wise in everything in which the most eminent scholar could instruct me, but I would rather know the things which are freely given me of God by His Spirit than have all the "wisdom of the wise," which God will "destroy," and the "understanding of the prudent," which He will "reject." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

"This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."

I DO not claim the things to know,
As those by earthly wisdom taught:
But other things which *Scriptures* show,
And by the Spirit in me wrought;
I know, to my supreme delight,
They turn my darkness into light.

March 27th.

AM I sufficiently earnest in the work I do for my heavenly Master?—

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.—Ecc. ix. 10.

I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.—John ix. 4.

IN the prophecy of Micah we read of men doing “evil with both hands earnestly.” In the history of Hezekiah we read that “in every work he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it *with all his heart*, and prospered” (2 Chron. xxxi. 21). And of Elijah we read that “he prayed earnestly,” and his prayer was answered. The Apostle Jude exhorts us to contend “earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

Activity, excitement, loud talking of what *is* being done or *going to be done*, is not earnestness. I have known men, very active and blustering in business, who have succeeded in little. So in religion. It is when the *heart* works, and the *two* hands with it, that there is earnestness—the heart showing life and sincerity; the two hands showing activity and labour. He who thus works for his Lord will, without aiming at this, do something to be seen of men, and to be approved of by Christ.

If men around me are earnest either in work for Satan or the world, ought not I to be so in work for Jesus and His cause? Whether I pray, sing, give, love, believe, exhort, reprove, preach—do the highest or lowest work—may I be *earnest*! This, with God, and with His true people, will cover many failings in manner, speech, and appearance. I would rather burn myself in “snatching a brother out of the fire” than let him perish in it. I had better be counted a madman or fool for Christ, according to the world and lukewarm professors, than be “neither hot nor cold,” and be rejected of my Lord. “It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.”

O Christ, enflame my soul with Thy all-constraining love, so that I may, like Thee and Thine Apostles, do good “with both hands, earnestly.”

SEE for ever all around thee, sin and suffering, want and shame,

And no help can be too lowly, so the aim be high and holy,

To be offered in His name.

Sow thy seed with hand unstinting, in the furrows ploughed by love;

Thou wilt find the ears, ripe-golden, when the harvest feast is holden

In the Master's home above.

March 28th.

IF I have not the gifts and graces of others with whom I hold Christian fellowship, am I envious or jealous of them?—

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.—Rom. xii. 3.

Wherefore laying aside . . . all envies.—1 Peter ii. 1.

Love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

IN an orchard there is generally a variety of fruit trees, each having its own ability from its Maker to bear its own peculiar fruit. The owner of these trees, or anyone else, would be considered an eccentric man, if in the season he went to a pear tree, expecting to gather apples, or to a cherry tree, expecting to gather plums. So in the Church there is diversity in the gifts and graces bestowed upon its members by the Divine Head, and He only expects from each according to his respective endowments. Why, then, should envy or jealousy ever arise in one against another?

If Moses has not the gift of eloquence he cannot be eloquent; but Aaron has, and he can be eloquent for him. But shall Moses be envious of Aaron, or Aaron boast over Moses? If Obadiah has not the faith to bring down fire from heaven, Elijah has; and shall Obadiah envy him on that account? *He* did what Elijah did not, hid the Lord's prophets from the fury of Jezebel. Every man, according as he has received of God, one after this manner and one after that.

If I cannot be Paul or John or Peter, or anyone else, I will be myself, without envying either of them. If God meant me to be a star, He would have made me one; if I am only a glow-worm it is not for me to envy the star, but to show what light I can and to take heed that I do not degenerate into an *earth*-worm. As a believer in Jesus, may I, by the example of them who are *better* than I, be stimulated to become better than I am.

Gracious Father, forgive me wherein I have fostered in my heart any envy or jealousy of my brethren, and help me rather to love and esteem them for Thy sake!

IF to me there are not given
Gifts which others may possess,
Shall I show the envious leaven?
Shall I break the bond of peace?
Rather, Lord, may I rejoice
In the fellowship of love;
With a kindly heart and voice
Join with them their gifts to prove.

March 29th.

WHEN *I give of my substance to the Lord, in what spirit and measure do I give?—*

Freely ye have received, freely give.—Mark xii. 15.

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

GIVING to the Lord is as much a Scriptural duty as praying to the Lord, and ought to be as properly and faithfully performed. A Jew under the law was required to give a *tenith*. A Christian, while not under the law, ought to ask himself, Should I give less than a Jew? Being under grace, however, seems to liberate him from the law, but not from giving. He must still give, more or less; and his giving must not be regulated by others, nor by his own caprices or will. As of the ability which God giveth is the principle to act upon, and that not stingily, but liberally; not grudgingly, but with a cheerful heart.

To be always receiving in one way or other from the Lord, and not to give in return as an acknowledgment, is to be miserly, covetous, earthly, if not sensual and devilish. To give, as some give, both in spirit and measure, is almost as bad. If one throws a penny or a crown in charity, as he throws a bone to a dog, where is the *virtue* of the act? If a man doles out for his God a copper when he could as easily give a five-pound note, where is the virtue of that? To see the real, the heaven-appreciated motive and manner of giving, we must study the widow casting her two mites, which was all she had to live upon for the time, into the treasury of the Temple, and not the rich men throwing in of their abundance.

The resolutions passed at a negro missionary meeting comprehend the whole : That everyone give something; that he give as the Lord has prospered him; that he give cheerfully.

O Thou, Who, after giving the earth to the children of men to supply all their temporal needs, didst give Thyself a sacrifice on the Cross to save their souls, give me of Thy Spirit, that I may be more self-sacrificing in my gifts to Thy cause!

I GAVE My life for thee! My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be, and quickened from the dead!
I gave My life for thee; what hast thou given to Me?
Oh, let thy life be given, thy years for Him be spent;
World-fetters all be riven, and joy with suffering blent!
I gave Myself for thee; give thou thyself to Me!

March 30th.

AM I one of those professors who are regular in most of the duties of religion, but when questioned as to some one in particular, show irritation and deficiency?—

One thing thou lackest.—Luke xviii. 22.

One thing is needful.—Luke x. 42.

With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.—Ez. xxxiii. 31.

MOST men have their *sensitive* part, of which, perhaps, they have no knowledge until it happens to be touched. A friend of mine once went to a physician to be examined before taking out a policy in an assurance society. He did not imagine but that he was perfectly sound all through. The physician examined him closely, and he bore the test without flinching up to a certain point, but the moment he was sounded in his right lung he gave way. "Ah," said the physician, "I see; you are unsound *there*."

So it is; some Christians are all right excepting in one thing. Do you pray? Yes. Do you give? Yes. Do you attend church? Yes. Do you have family prayer? Yes. Do you read your Bible? Yes. Do you so love the world that you cannot give it up for Christ? Hesitation! Perhaps resistance of your impertinence for asking such a question. Another one is questioned in similar ways until you come to his *love of strong drink*. That is his business. Another is questioned on the same lines, until you mention *love of worldly pleasures*. Those are matters for himself to decide.

Lord, how much better should I be if I was so examined? Should not I be found weak in some particular part of my spiritual life? "All these things have I kept," but is there not yet lacking one thing to make me perfect? And does not this nullify all else, as one rift in the lute spoils all its music, and one ingredient left out of the prescription renders all the medicine of no use?

What important results hang on one thing! A captain has his ship all complete in everything, but he lacks the *compass*. Without this he dare not put out to sea. A man makes his will, bequeathing great fortunes to various persons and objects, but dies without signing it! I have so many things in religion, but lack *the love of God*. This keeps me out of the Kingdom. Yet this one thing I might have had more easily than many others which I have that are not essential.

ONE only gift can justify,
The boasting soul that knows his God;
When Jesus doth His blood apply,
I glory in His sprinkled blood.

March 31st.

AM I on my guard against being led away from the "simplicity that is in Christ?"—

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.—2 Cor. xi. 3.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.—Col. ii. 8.

THERE were in Israel "lying prophets" that deceived Ahab to his utter ruin. In Jeremiah's day there were "diviners" and "prophets" who deceived the people by prophesying lies. John the Apostle says "Many false prophets or teachers are gone into the world." Paul cautions the Ephesians against the "sleight of men, and their cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

Are there not such teachers in these days? Are these not they in whom Satan appears "as an angel of light," to deceive, if possible, the very elect; through whom the old serpent acts in his old subtilty to turn the minds of true believers from their simple faith and love in Jesus? Is he not at this moment, through their "enticing words," their church activities, their persuasive looks, their apparently-true, but really false, theories, deluding thousands? "The old serpent," says Trapp, "when he was young outwitted our first parents: now that he is old, and we young, what will he do if we watch not?"

I am in danger, as all are, and must needs be on my guard. I must watch for myself, and for others, too, who I think are off their guard. If an angel himself try to deceive me, to say nothing of a false human teacher, whoever he be, I must cling to Christ simply, only, always. Anything put between Him and me must have no mercy. Without parleying or reasoning, I must hurl it from me as I would poison, though offered in a goblet studded with diamonds, by the hand of Gabriel himself.

"All the heresies," says Dr. S. Clarke, "which have corrupted and afflicted the Church, owe their origin to men's departing from the simplicity of Scripture, and must derive a cure from a return to it."

Thou Teacher sent from God, may I sit at Thy feet and hear Thy word and live by it!

THE men who slight Thy faithful word, in their own lies confide,
These are the temple of the Lord, and heathens all beside!
The temple of the Lord are these, the only church and true,
Who live in pomp, and wealth, and ease, and Jesus never knew.
The temple of the Lord—they pull Thy living temples down,
And cast out every gracious soul that trembles at Thy frown.

Spring.

How smiling wakes the verdant year,
 Arrayed in velvet green !
How glad the circling fields appear
 That bound the blooming scene !

Forth walks from heaven the beaming Spring,
 Calm as the dew she sheds,
And o'er the Winter's mutt'ring king
 Her veil of roses spreads.

The sky serene, the waking flowers,
 The river's loosened wave,
Repay the kind and tepid hours,
 With all the charms they gave.

And hark ! From yon melodious grove
 The feathered warblers break,
And into notes of joy and love
 The solitude awake !

And shall the first beloved of heaven,
 Mute, listen as they sing ?
Shall man, to whom the lyre is given,
 Not wake one grateful string ?

Oh, let me join th'aspiring lay
 That gives my Maker praise ;
Join, but in louder notes than they,
 Than all their praises raise !

O Thou, from whose all-gracious eye
 The sun of splendour beams,
Whose glories every ray supply
 That gilds the trembling streams, —

O'er nature's green and teeming fields
 Bid flowery graces rise ;
And every sweet creation yields,
 Salute the morning skies.

Where yonder moves the plough of toil
 Along the stubborn land,
Oh, kindly lift the yielding soil
 And soothe the lab'ring hand !

Then bid gay fruitfulness around
 Her blooming reign extend,
And where Thy richest gifts are found,
 Tell who the heavenly Friend.

Hunt.

Memoranda.

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Arrayed in velvet green !
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That bound the blooming scene !

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Hunt.

April 1st.

WHILST I may be evil spoken of for my best deeds, and my motives may be misjudged, have I the rejoicing assurance that I am **APPROVED OF GOD?**—

Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.—Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.—Job xvi. 19. He is near that justifieth me.—Isa. l. 8.

If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.—1 John iii. 21.

WHAT is more painful to a conscientious Christian than to know that his motives are suspected in work which he is doing for God? One would think that such a thing could not take place as between Christians. Alas! is it not too common an occurrence? Mr. M—— was a brother of some means and talent in the church of A——. He was much devoted to Christ, and exercised his means and abilities in doing good. In a gathering of brethren on a certain occasion, he was the subject of their talk, that is, his gifts to the poor, his work in the town and neighbourhood, his occasional exercises in prayer and in public addresses. Mr. A—— remarked that he thought Mr. M—— would act more consistently if he looked after his business and family a little more than he did, for by report he was negligent of them. Mr. B—— considered that Mr. M—— was trying to curry *favour* with the minister. Mr. C—— said he was afraid Mr. M—— was seeking *popularity* among the people. Mr. D—— was alone in his opinion, for he thought that Mr. M—— was disinterested in all he did, and instead of questioning his motives, it would be more Christlike to speak of him as an example of Christian activity and earnestness worthy of imitation.

This conversation reached Mr. M——'s ears. He felt it keenly and wept over it before God. It led him to examine his motives. For his comfort he could say, "God knows all; I leave it with Him; my witness is on high and within; I am satisfied with this testimony." Mr. M—— did not become provoked, nor in anger cease his acts and deeds of usefulness, but gave himself, if possible, more fully to them, caring for none of those uncharitable surmisings and remarks. May I do likewise under similar circumstances!

WHATE'ER I say or do, Thy glory be my aim;
My offerings all be offered through Thy ever blessed Name!
Jesu, my single eye Be fixed on Thee alone;
Thy Name be praised on earth, on high; Thy will by all be done!

April 2nd.

WHAT is now my Christian hope in its nature, ground, object, source, influence, and fruits?—

God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and a GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.—2 Thess. ii. 16: Heb. vi. 19, 20.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.—1 John iii. 3.

HOPE is one of the three graces which Paul says “abideth.” This clings to man when everything else goes from him. It is a “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” “Whilst there is life there is hope.”

The Christian has hope in common with all men, but he also has hope that is peculiar to himself. If in the things of this life he only had hope, he would be of all men most miserable; but having hope of better and nobler things to come, he is of all men most happy.

What is your hope, *living* Christian? My hope is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. i. 1); Christ in me, the hope of glory (Col. i. 28). How came you by your hope? By being renewed in the spirit of my mind (1 Peter i. 3). What is your hope to you? I am saved by hope (Rom. viii. 24); it is the helmet of salvation (1 Thess. v. 8); the anchor of my soul (Heb. vi. 19). What influence has it upon you? Rejoicing in hope (Rom. v. 2). What do you hope for? I hope through the Spirit for righteousness (Gal. v. 5); I hope for the coming of the Lord Jesus (Titus ii. 13); I hope for a resurrection from the dead to eternal life; I hope for an incorruptible and everlasting inheritance (1 Peter i. 3). Whence came your hope? God gave it to me in Jesus (2 Thess. ii. 16).

What is your hope, *dying* Christian? O, glorious hope, blooming with immortality! Full of brightness, full of beauty, on the verge of Canaan and about to enter! I am crossing the river, but the “bottom is good.” Victory is mine through the blood of the Lamb!

“O Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble,” I bless Thee for planting in me this gracious, living hope!

THREE blessed, bliss-inspiring hope;
It lifts my fainting spirit up,
It brings to life the dead;
My conflicts here will soon be passed,
And you and I ascend at last
Triumphant with our Head.

April 3rd.

DO I withstand the forces of evil as they oppose me in the spiritual life with an armour of my own ; or do I resist with the armour of God ?—

Having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace : Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked : and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.—Eph. vi. 14-18.

THE battlefield of life is strewn with the slain of those who entered upon its conflicts in their own strength. How can it be expected that an undrilled, unequipped novice, who enters into warfare with well-trained and long-experienced soldiers, should come to any other end than that of defeat ? To think of a man who has nothing but his own moral resources, whatever they are, going into conflict with "principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places !" The thing seems absurd on the very face of it. Yet this is done by the vast majority of mankind, not in regiments, as soldiers on a field of battle, but as individuals. Think of it : one against a host, that "darkens heaven and rules this lower world !" No wonder that the slain of the enemy are so many !

This is the more lamentable because there is no necessity for it. The conflict itself is inevitable, but it is not inevitable that a man should enter into it in his own strength and all alone. A provision is made, called the "armour of God." If he put on this, and fight under the command of the "Captain of his salvation," he shall come off more than conqueror, though a thousand worlds are arrayed against him !

Was not I for many years foolish enough to fight my foes in my *own* armour, and, excepting in conflict with a *pigmy* now and again, and that one of the smallest, was I not always beaten ? But since I "put on the whole armour of God," I have never been overcome, excepting when I have been found without it, or asleep, or some part of it forgotten, or used it in my own strength. Seeing the subtilty, the number, the power, the vigilance of my foes, I need every moment to be on my guard, watching unto prayer, and trusting in Him Who alone, even with the whole armour upon me, can give me the victory.

THE armour of my God—His truth and righteousness,
His hope, and faith in Jesu's blood, His everlasting peace,
His sure, unfailing word, His watching unto prayer ;—
With this, the armour of my Lord, His victory I shall share.

April 4th.

WHILE in this world I have to do with such a variety of temperaments and opinions of men, do I by Divine help carry within me a rejoicing consciousness of my integrity and rectitude?—

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards. —2 Cor. i. 12.

BLESSED is the man who, like Paul, can stand in the midst of his enemies, falsely accusing him, clamouring for his blood, and say, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts xxiii. 1).

A solid rejoicing this! It matters not what epithets of reproach, what bitter persecutions, what infliction of punishment, what buffetings and privations, if in the midst of all one has a pure conscience before God. This is strength in the soul which conquers, and peace that passeth all understanding. It gives a sense of security that neither men nor demons can destroy. It holds a fort which, though a thousand hosts engage to take it, remains immovable. No wonder that Paul, as he beheld the rabble-world with all its commotions surging against him, exclaimed, "*None of these things move me.*"

"A good conscience," says Addison, "is to the soul what health is to the body; it preserves a constant ease and serenity within us, and more than countervails all the calamities and afflictions which can possibly befall us."

To have this good conscience, with its rejoicing before God and man, was Paul's continual "exercise." That is, it was his constant care so to live that nothing should make a discordant sound or break its divine harmony.

I would that this blessing were mine! O God, give me Thy grace that I may attain it, and then so to exercise myself that I may keep it and carry it about with me everywhere and in everything. So shall I have in my soul a concert of rejoicing which shall be sweeter to me than any music of the churches or of the angels. So shall I have also a fortress of strength within me that shall withstand all the assaults of earth and hell. "The testimony of a good conscience"! Its value is inestimable!

WHAT stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just:
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

April 5th.

IN religion am I satisfied by having a name to live whilst I am dead?—

Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.—John xv. 8.

I have chosen you . . . that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.—John xv. 16.

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—Phil. i. 11.

I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.—Rev. iii. 1.

A *NAME* to live! Of what use is that to a *dead* man? Of what use is a dead man to society because he has a *name* to live? A tree in a garden that is fruitless might as well be in a wilderness, unless, perchance, it is a tree for *ornament*, and that is of no practical service. A servant who will not work, neither should he eat. He may be a mischief to other servants. Forsooth, he were better standing in the market-place than living in the household. A lamp in the temple with no light or oil is as useless there as were the lamps of the foolish virgins when the bridegroom came.

If either one or more of the above emblems represent me, I ought not to be satisfied. To be called a Christian, to be recognized as such in the church, to have access to its privileges, and yet to know in myself that I am *dead*! A living man, but a dead Christian! What a monster I am before heaven! I ought at once to cry out for the quickening Spirit to give me life in Christ Jesus. Nothing less can make me a partaker of the nature of a Christian under the name which I have, and move me into such activities as will agree with both.

Lord, help me! What is the name Christian if the Christ is not there? No more than the name Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Jew. What use is *position* in a church without living service? Not so much as a pillar that bears up a gallery or a dummy statuette that occupies a place in a sculptor's studio.

O Head of the Church! O ever-living Redeemer! baptize me with Thy own living Spirit that I may have His life in me, which the more it constrains me to real acts of labour and fruitfulness will make me the more beautiful before Thyself and the angels.

O H bring us back once more
The vanished days of yore,
When the world with faith was filled?
Bring back the fervid zeal,
The hearts of fire and steel,
The hands that believe and build!

April 6th.

SHOULD I not feel that my cup of happiness was full if only that one thing — was out of the way?—

And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.—Esther v. 11, 13.

HAMAN was very rich, had a multitude of children, was held in honour by the king, much esteemed by the queen, was looking forward to still greater honours; but, said he, "All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Mordecai would not do homage to Haman as he passed in and out of the king's gate. This was Haman's great trial; his only drawback in life! Why? It mortified his pride, which to him was so dear. A small fly to spoil his large pot of "apothecary's ointment!" What a Mordecai it is against a man enjoying his wealth when he thinks that any moment he may be taken away from it; or thinks of how he came by it! The Duke of Wellington had his Mordecai against his full enjoyment of the victory of Waterloo—the heavy loss he had sustained in men and arms.

Who has not a Mordecai sitting somewhere in the way of his perfect bliss? What little things are allowed to come between us and happiness—a little toothache, a mote in the eye, a thorn in the flesh, an unkind word, a disappointed hope, a frustrated plan, an unruly child! These and such like are Mordecai to many against their full enjoyment of life. How often does one feel in himself, "All this company, all this prosperity, all this pleasure, all these blandishments, honours, and promotions, avail me nothing while my conscience is ill at ease and I have no peace with God!"

So it is in the Christian life. "How is it with you, brother?" "Thank you, I should be happy but for my *doubts* and *fears*"; another, "It would be a blessed life to me, would religion, but for my *besetting sin*"; another, "I should be much better than I am if I could get away from business to attend the means of grace more than I do."

Ah, these Mordecai! How many of them we ourselves make! Besides, why should a thousand of them affect me, if the way is open to go in and out at my leisure to see the King!

WHAT various hindrances we meet
In coming to the mercy-seat?
But who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be often there?

April 7th.

IS the chief blessing that I desire from Jesus, to be like Him?—

Be therefore followers (imitators) of God as dear children ; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.—Eph. v. 1, 2.

Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.—Rom. viii. 29.

THEY who desire to be like the great masters in art or science, study their *works*. It is no use for them to study the masters themselves for such a purpose. It is their works they aspire to imitate, not them.

This is not so with me and Jesus. I may study His works and words most profoundly, but I shall not wake up to the assurance that I am like Him, as Correggio when he first saw the magnificent paintings of Raphael, exclaimed, "I also am a painter." If I desire to be like Jesus I must study *Him*. I must receive His Spirit and partake of His nature. I must seek His presence and hold fellowship with Him. I must tell Him simply and sincerely, "Jesus, I want to be like Thee. Thou knowest Thyself better than I know Thee ; but though I know so little, I know enough to desire to be like *Thee* more than to be like even an archangel. Dear Jesus, make me like Thee ; I cannot do it ; no one can, save Thyself." "Are you, my son, perfectly willing to leave yourself in My hands to do it?" "I am, blessed Jesus!"

Is this so, my soul ? Dost thou know what thou hast done ? No, excepting that I have left myself in the hands of the sweetest, loveliest, best of beings to make me like Himself. The way He will do it I know not, I care not ; only that He do it is my thought. I know I am, as it were, a rough uncouth block, and I shall need some hard chiselling ; but what matters, if He shape me into His lovely image and breathe into me His own life ? It is said that other sculptors worked after a pattern, but Angelo after the ideal of his own mind. Thus the Divine Artist will form me after His own mind ; and so His work will distinguish itself from that of a copyist or imitator. I shall be the ideal of Christ and not of self or of any other creature.

O the hope, the anticipation of being like my Lord ! What soul-inspiring bliss ! When shall it be ? I must leave myself in His hands. I seem overwhelmed with the thought that it ever should be so !

THOU art my Pattern ; make me bear
More of Thy gracious image here
Then God the Judge shall own my name
Among the followers of the Lamb.

April 8th.

ARE all my recreations such as harmonize with the will or word of God?—

Abstain from all appearance of evil.—1 Thess. v. 22.

Walk in wisdom towards them that are without.—Col. iv. 5.

RECREATION," says Bishop Hall, "is intended to the mind as whetting is to the scythe—to sharpen the edge of it: which otherwise would grow dull and blunt. He, therefore, that spends his whole time in recreation, is ever whetting, never mowing; his grass may grow, and his steed starve: as contrarily he that always toils, and never recreates, is ever mowing, never whetting; labouring much to little purpose: as good no scythe as no edge. Then only doth the work go forward when the scythe is so seasonably and moderately whetted that it may cut, and so cuts that it may have the help of sharpening. I would so interchange, that I neither be dull with work, nor idle and wanton with recreation."

Are my recreations serviceable to the relaxation of my mind and the health of my body without being injurious to my soul? Do I give no more time to them than what is necessary for these ends? Can I or do I ask God's blessing on them? Should I be afraid to go from the midst of them into the presence of the Great Judge? Or are they such as fill my soul with the spirit and love of the world? Such as savour of the pomps of Satan? Such as bring me into association with ungodly men and women? Such as cherish frivolity, or vanity, or lust, or religious indifference, or encroach upon my private or social devotions?

In my recreation I will be guided by the word of God and my conscience, as enlightened by the same. I must not go by my *wishes* or by others' examples or persuasions. If at any time I find a recreation affecting my love to God, or my attention to religious means, or my duty of doing good, or my ardour and zeal for Christ, I must not repeat it. I had better live, as it were, a hermit, than allow any recreation to wheedle me out of my heartfelt religion. This is the "*pearl of great price*." If I lose this, shall I find it again in recreations?

O Lord, save me and Thy whole church from being carried away with worldly or semi-worldly recreation, to the neglect of the "great salvation!"

IN all my vast concerns with Thee, In vain my soul would try
To shun Thy presence, Lord, or flee The notice of Thine eye;
Thy all-surrounding sight surveys My rising and my rest,
My public walks, my private ways, The secrets of my breast.

April 9th.

IS Jesus to me of such priceless value in Himself, as well as in His gracious relations to me, that I should be willing, if necessary, to forego all things, yea, life itself, rather than give up my believing hold of Him?—

What things were gain to me, those I counted loss. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.—Phil. iii. 7-10.

IF Jesus is not to me the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely, the Priceless Treasure, the All in all of Beauty, Plenty, Riches, Glory, Power, Holiness—what is He? If I do not take Him as having pre-eminence in all things, can I have Him at all? Will He realize Himself to me in any other light or relation? A diamond in my hand can be nothing but a diamond, though I may treat it as a bit of charcoal.

If then, Jesus is realized by me in the light in which He really is, what is anything I hold on earth, yea, what is *life* itself to give up for Him? “All that a man hath will he give for his life”; then it follows that all I have, and life besides, I will yield rather than give up Him Who is more in value than all I have, and life into the bargain.

It was in this light Paul contemplated Jesus when he wrote the words quoted above. In this light Jesus speaks of Himself when He declares that he who is not willing to give his life and all he has for Him is not worthy of Him. Nothing in heaven or earth must be allowed to come between the soul and Christ.

O Thou Sweetness of sweetnesss, Thou Beauty of beauties, Thou Glory of glories, Thou Superlative of all superlatives, Thou Infinite Treasure of infinite excellencies, I will hold Thee more tenaciously than a miser his gold. I will cling to Thee as a drowning man to him who plunges into the water to save him. I will fasten Thee to my heart as the Jews nailed Thee to the Cross, only not to be removed. I will never lose sight of Thee. I will make Thee myself, so that he that takes Thee shall take me, or if I lose Thee I shall lose myself. We will be so one that even death shall not part us!

I WILL gladly for His Name
Bear the cross, endure the shame,
Joyfully for Him to die,—
Is not death but victory?

April 10th.

IN things of sheer indifference, respecting which the Scriptures have given no judgment, am I to be swayed by the opinions of others or by my own convictions?—

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink (for eating and drinking, *Margin*), or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind: and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.—Col. ii. 16-19.

IN the above passage the Apostle gives examples of the things respecting which we are not to judge one another. He also specifies a class of persons who are likely to judge us, and by whom we should, of all judges, be least influenced.

As God has given me a conscience of my own, with which to judge, I must use it *as my own and for myself* under the guidance of His Spirit and His word. To my own Master I stand or fall. I may do a thing which to another would be sin, but not to me, nor to God. Sin, before God, is not as I think or as my brother thinks. Sin is the transgression of the law. Apart from the law, if I am persuaded in my own mind as to this or that being right or wrong, I must be my own judge as to whether I do it or not, as I am responsible and not another. At the same time I am at liberty to take the judgment of a brother and act by it. Whatever use I make of my liberty, I must not act *capriciously, self-willedly, offensively*. As a Christian I am bound by my charity to do all things for peace: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Things which do not come against my *convictions*, I do not say my interests, my wishes, my indulgencies, I am at liberty to forego, for the good of others and the glory of God. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" himself to do. (Rom. xiv. 22.)

O Thou Righteous and Merciful Judge, by Thy Spirit guide me in all things

THE conscience, that sole monarchy in man,
Owing allegiance to no earthly prince;
Made by the edict of creation free;
Made sacred, made above all human laws,
Holding of Heaven alone; of most divine
And indefeasible authority;
An individual sovereignty, that none
Created might, unpunished, bind or touch,
And unamenable to all below.

April 11th.

AM I among those who when they see anyone suddenly visited with death or some disaster, say he must have been guilty of some great sins to have brought such a visitation upon him?—

Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay. . . Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay.— Luke xiii. 2-4.

IT was a fault in Job's friends to charge him with some great sins because he was visited with such severe trials. But the Almighty was angry with them for such conduct (Job. xlii. 7). The disciples asked Jesus, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind." Jesus answered, "Neither" (John ix. 2, 3). The "Barbarians" on Malta, when they saw the "venomous beast" hang on Paul's hand, said, "No doubt this man is a murderer, &c." (Acts xxviii. 4.)

This superstition has lived through the ages down to the present, though now it is not so wide spread; yet, possibly, it may be in the *thought* more than in the *expression*.

What can be a more false conclusion than to say, "So and so is a great sinner because he suffers so much in his person, family, or circumstances"? According to this logic, what a sinner righteous Job must have been! And then the holy martyrs, and those worthies recorded in the eleventh of Hebrews, what of them? There is no reason nor Scripture in this superstition, as there is not in any other.

Our God is not a *vengeful* God. He is long-suffering; not willing that any should perish. Even on the supposition that anyone is visited with special affliction for special sin, it is in *love*, that the issue of it may be the forgiveness of the sin.

"For my part," said Edmund Calamy the Puritan, "if I would censure any, it should be such as live wickedly and meet with no affliction; these have the *black brand* of reprobation upon them. Ambrose would not tarry a night in the house of a gentleman that had never in all his life been afflicted, for fear lest some great and sudden judgment should betide it." This may be as great superstition as the other.

O Lord, may I look to myself in this matter, and leave myself and all others in Thy righteous hands!

I BOW before the noble mind
That freely some great wrong forgives;
Yet nobler is the one forgiven,
Who bears that burden well and lives.

April 12th.

AS one professing to be led of the Spirit, have I relinquished the works of the flesh, and do I bring forth the fruit of the Spirit?—

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.—Gal. v. 19-23.

“THE works of the flesh” and “the fruit of the Spirit” are “contrary one to the other,” as light and darkness, as Belial and Christ, as hell and heaven. Where one is the other cannot be. A tree could as easily bear grapes and nuts as a man the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh, that is, unrenewed nature in man, is permeated, possessed of the life of sin, and all its works are in agreement with it. The renewed man in Christ Jesus is possessed of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit he bears is of Him and not of the man himself. Each is distinct, yea, separate one from the other as a hawthorn and a vine; and the produce of each is as opposite.

What comes of the flesh is said to be “works,” implying *labour* and *effort* to produce them. And is not this the case? Only they in whom the works of the flesh are manifest know the labours against conscience, truth, virtue, and God, through which they have passed to bring them forth.

The “fruit of the Spirit,” on the other hand, like fruit on a tree, is the natural outcome of the life of the Spirit—without remorse, without opposition to law, without struggling against the sense of right. To *live* in the Spirit is to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

O, the pains men take to be wicked and to go to perdition, when by being *led* of the Spirit they might live holy lives and find their way to heaven. “If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. viii. 13-14.)

O Lord, I beseech Thee to give me grace to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to have no confidence in the flesh!

L ORD, may Thy agony, Thy tears, Thy pain,
Thy stripes, Thy shame, Thy wounds, Thy death transfuse
Their hidden virtue that the soul renews,
Till all my sins with Thee be crucified and slain.

April 13th.

THAT there might be consistency between my living and my high calling of God in Christ Jesus, what should be my daily spirit and conduct?—

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.—Eph. iv. 1, 2.

Showing all good fidelity.—Titus ii. 10.

The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—1 Peter iii. 4.

EVERY calling in life requires a preparation for it and conduct in it, corresponding with its nature and design. There are degrees and diversities in God's callings. Everyone is good, but the best and highest is that which is "in Christ Jesus." This is a calling that may be followed by each Christian in any other calling which he may have from God. Is he called to be a soldier, a sailor, a tradesman, a merchant, a statesman, a minister, or any other, in that he can also follow this. That will not add lustre to this, but this will make that brighter and more beautiful in all its parts.

To live consistently with my "calling of God in Christ Jesus," I must live in the Spirit of Jesus. This will give harmony and symmetry to my life after the pattern of Him in Whom I am called of God.

I must walk as an "heir of God and co-heir with Jesus Christ." When Scipio was asked to associate himself with a certain disreputable person, he said, "I would if I were not general of the army." Antigonus, under similar temptation, said, "Remember I am a king's son." When Alexander was asked to run at the Olympic Games, he inquired, "Do kings run at the Olympic?"

Thus, when I am tempted to act out of character with my calling of God in Christ, I must say, "I am a Christian and cannot act out of that character." What I am in Christ, must take precedence of what I am in the world, or in society, or even in the church. I may do nothing which I cannot do in Him. Shall I wear the livery of Christ and do the work of the devil? If I use my trade or my office to justify me in doing this or going there out of harmony with my "high calling of God," where is Christian propriety?

HELP me my calling to fulfil,
In all I do to do Thy will,
And glorify Thy Name;
By meekness, lowliness, and love,
By wisdom coming from above,
My life in Christ proclaim.

April 14th.

DO I recognize the Holy Spirit as the Supreme Revealer of Jesus Christ to my heart?—

When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.—John xv. 26.

All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.—Isa. liv. 13.

Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.—1 John ii. 20.

THE Apostles were with our Lord “from the beginning,” and had every opportunity of knowing Him in His person, words, and works; yet Jesus speaks to them at the *end* as though they knew Him not, for says He, “When the Spirit is come He will guide you into all truth; He will testify of Me. He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”

So it was, that after the Holy Spirit was received by them, they knew Him as though they had not known Him before. They saw Him and spake of Him in new lights with new views and new feelings. They learned as much of Him in three days as they had in the three years of following Him in person when on the earth.

Only the spirit of a man can reveal him to others; so only the Spirit of Christ can reveal Christ. There are persons who can only be known by looking at them in their own revelations of themselves. You cannot depend upon what others say of them, any more than others can depend upon what they say of you. The Temple could be known in its external architectural manifestation, but to see the Shekinah the veil must be passed and the Holy of Holies entered; and only the high priest could do this. The natural reason may know Jesus as He appeared in the temple of His body, but to see Him and know Him in the Holy of Holies of His nature He must be revealed by His own Spirit—the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter.

I may read of Jesus, even in His word, and hear of Him from His ministers, but if His Spirit is not in me to teach me I shall only see Him as the Jews saw Him, or at the most as His disciples saw Him before the Holy Ghost came upon them.

Blessed Jesus, fulfil to me the promise of the Comforter that He may testify of Thee, and be in me the abiding witness that Thou art my Saviour and my God!

THAT heavenly Teacher of mankind,
That Guide infallible impart,
To show the Saviour to my mind,
And bring Him to my waiting heart!

April 15th.

IS my moral vision so affected by self-righteousness that I can see only the SMALL faults in others and not the GREAT faults in myself?—

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.—Matt. vii. 3-5.

IT is said that the Pharisees of old carried two bags, one before them and the other behind them. In the one before them they put the faults of others, in the one behind their own. Hence the faults of others were always at their command to handle, but their own were difficult to come at; or, as the Saviour intimates, they had eyes to see the *mote* in other people's eyes, but would not see the *beam* in their own.

This is indeed a defective vision, or, perhaps, something worse, a *diseased heart*, which has its influence upon the eyes. Alas! how many are thus affected! We know them not by their eyes, but only by their *tongues*.

Whatever others may do in this particular, I will endeavour not to follow them. I can see so many things which are wrong in myself that I have quite enough to do to look after them without troubling myself with the faults of others to talk about them, and be blind to my own. If my brother is a Pharisee and despises the publican, I would fain be the publican and despise myself. Who am I that I should judge another? Better judge myself! If I *lie*, shall I find fault with the *drunkard*? If I am a hypocrite, shall I say anything against the formalist? If I *steal*, shall I expose the man that cheats? If I am *covetous*, shall I call the spendthrift a fool? I must be perfect myself before I find fault with him that is imperfect, whatever his imperfection may be. If I live in a glass house, shall I be so thoughtless as to throw stones at passers-by?

Gracious God, help me to mend myself before I tell another he wants mending. Help me to be true before I complain of my neighbour being false.

IN trusting self, may I beware,
Nor think above what God hath done,
Nor boastfully my state declare,
But magnify Thy grace alone,
And then my faith's true measure prove
By soberness of lowly love.

April 16th.

WHEN I am chastened of the Lord, am I like chaff that flies in the face of the thrasher, or like the corn which lies quietly at his feet ?—

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.—Job i. 21, 22.

It is the Lord : let Him do what seemeth Him good.—1 Sam. iii. 18.

Be still, and know that I am God.—Ps. xlv. 10.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction.—Prov. iii. 11.

TO “hear the rod and Who hath appointed it” ; to know the Lord as righteous and loving in all His dispensations, and to acquiesce in them ; to stand in the midst of losses, and not complain ; to pass through the fire, or through the waters, and see the Lord with us, and calmly submit, is the glorious privilege of all God’s saints.

Stonewall Jackson, an American general, was once asked, “Suppose those eyes of yours, which give you so much trouble, should become suddenly blind, do you believe your serenity would remain unclouded ?” He paused a moment, as if to weigh fully the exact measure of every word he uttered, and then said : “I am sure of it ; even such a misfortune could not make me doubt the love of God.” Still further to test him it was urged : “Conceive, then, that besides your hopeless blindness, you were condemned to be bedridden, and racked with pain for life ; you would hardly call yourself happy then ?” There was again the same deliberateness before he replied : “Yes, I think I could ; my faith in the Almighty wisdom is absolute : and why should this accident change it ?” Touching him upon a tender point—his impatience of anything bordering on any kind of dependence—the test was pushed further : “But if in addition to blindness and incurable infirmity and pain, you had to receive grudging charity from those on whom you had no claim, what then ?” There was a strange reverence in his lifted eye, and an exalted expression over his whole face, as he replied with slow deliberateness : “If it was God’s will, I think I could lie there content a hundred years !”

O Jesus, while learning of Thy saints the grace of submission to God, may I especially conform myself to Thy example !

THOUGH in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy clouds around me spread,
My steadfast heart shall fear no ill,
For Thou, O Lord, art with me still ;
Thy friendly rod shall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful shade.

April 17th.

WHEN depression comes upon me, do I give way to it, or resist it?—

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me. . . Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.—Ps. xlii. 5-7.

ALMOST everything in this earthly state is subject to depression: the air, the water, the fire, trade, commerce; yea, religion itself. What wonder, then, if the soul, like the body, should sometimes be "cast down" and "disquieted." It is only in analogy with all things around. There are invisible, subtle influences in the spiritual world, which operate on the soul to effect this, as there are in the physical world to affect the body. It is, then, nothing to surprise one, when, like the Psalmist, he feels his soul cast down within him.

This depression in some form or other comes to all. The rich are not exempt any more than the poor. David, king of Israel, knew what it was as well as Elijah the Tishbite.

Abraham Lincoln at one time wrote, "I am now the most miserable being living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family there would not be a cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better I cannot tell; I awfully forbode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me." Dean Hook in a time of depression wrote, "My life has been a failure. I have done many things tolerably, but nothing well. As a parish priest, as a preacher, and now as a writer, I am quite aware that I have failed, and the more so because my friends contradict the assertion." Elijah, in a state of depression, went and sat under a juniper tree, wishing that God would shorten his life. Dr. Payson, one of the holiest of men, was often so depressed that he knew not what to do! Poet Cowper, too, was a martyr to this experience.

"Why," this depression? is more than my wisdom can define, or the wisdom of my fathers. I know what it is; but I thank God I hope in Him, when it comes, that I shall soon again praise Him in the light of His countenance. May my depression never be such as to crush my hope. May I always cling to hope, and hope always CLING TO GOD!

WHY restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
The praise of Him Who is thy God,
Thy health's eternal spring.

April 18th.

AM I mindful of little things in my Christian life?—

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much —Luke xvi. 10.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—Matt. xxv. 21.

"TAKE care of the pence," said Franklin, "and the pounds will take care of themselves." "Little things make perfection," said Angelo to one who wondered that he should bestow such minute pains in the finishing of a statue that he was operating upon.

So it is with the Christian. A little deed of kindness shown here, a little word of love spoken there, a little act of mercy exercised at one time, a little work of charity done at another, a little impatience given up to-day, a little restraint of the passions and appetites to-morrow, a little self-denial in this and a little consideration in that, and so on all round, will at the end show a development of character and an accumulation of virtues which only He can calculate, Who sat over against the Temple and noticed the two mites which the widow cast into the treasury. What little rays make the ocean of sunlight. What indefinable particles compose the atmosphere. The great seas, the great mountains, the great globe itself is made up of littles. On the same principle everything mighty and perfect in the Christian life is comprised.

One fine day does not make a summer. Neither does one grace make a Christian ; but add love to faith, and patience to love, and gentleness to patience, and patience to long-suffering, and long-suffering to temperance, and so on, and the Christian will come out unmistakeable in features, even unto perfection ; as a painting or statue under the daily touches of the artist's skill ; or as a tree develops into perfection under the silent and imperceptible operation of nature's laws.

I would, indeed, look after what Satan, the world, and indifferent Christians might call "trifles." I see that on these depends the perfection of my Christian life. I would be faithful in the least, which will show in the end that I have been faithful in much, as he who saves a penny a day finds at the close of a year that he has been faithful to the amount of one pound ten shillings and fivepence.

LITTLE ray-lights make the sunshine, Little drops the ocean vast ;
Little seconds made the ages Which existed in the past.
All things great are made of littles, Which no human eye can see,
God, the greatest, to the smallest, Gives His care and sympathy.

April 19th.

AS a subject of contemplation, and as one for gratitude and praise, do I choose the LOVINGKINDNESS of the Lord?—

Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.—Ps. xxvi. 3.

How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.—Ps. xxxvi. 7.

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord.—Isa. lxiii. 7.

I HAVE seen a person in the National Gallery, or in South Kensington, stand before a picture and give it a brief study: he has moved to another, and given that a little more thought: he has gone to another, and done the same; at last, I have noticed, he came to one which engaged his attention so much that he took his seat in its presence, and remained in contemplation of it all the time that I was in the building.

So have I, in like manner, according to my ability, contemplated God in His works and word. I have viewed His power which has awed me, His justice which has bowed me in reverence, His truth which has ennobled me, His goodness which has surprised me, His mercy which has encouraged me, His love which has charmed me; but O, when I have come to His *lovingkindness*, the blending and commingling of the two chief elements of His being, this has drawn me, enamoured me, held me to it, so that I have fixed my thoughts upon it, like a miser his eyes on his gold, or like a lover his affections on his affianced. It has fascinated me so that I could not get from it. Morning, noon, and night, it has been “before my eyes.” As I have gazed upon it, it has seemed to rest upon me, as a crown ennobling me. Its excellence, its beauty, its heavenliness has enswathed me and been my joy, my inspiration, my peace, my paradise of bliss in thought, emotion, and desire. It has been a beatific vision in the flesh. I have exclaimed in the rapture of my soul, “How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.” “Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee.”

When life's clouds gather around me, and the world's cold waters surge against me, and the memories of past sins and failures come out as so many spectres in my soul, O God, let Thy lovingkindness, as sunshine, burst forth, and be to me a sweet relief, the light of heaven!

MY God, how excellent Thy grace,
Whence all our hope and comfort springs!
The sons of Adam in distress
Fly to the shadow of Thy wings.

April 20th.

I*S my love of the "brethren" such as constrains me to help them in all ways in my power, and join with any of them in the fellowship of Christian truth and charity?—*

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.—Rom. xii. 10.

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.—1 Peter iii. 8.

Add . . . to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.—2 Peter i. 5, 7.

Love one another with pure hearts fervently.—1 Peter i. 22.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.—1 John iv. 7.

I HAVE been in a family in which I have noticed anything but mutual kindness, sympathy, and love. I have been in another family in which these elements have been most conspicuous. As a result, brightness, unity, and peace have reigned all round. It has been a joy and pleasure to be one of it for a time.

Have I not seen a church too much like the former? Yes, and I have seen a church of which the latter is a type. To live in the one was to live in discomfort; to live in the other, edifying and helpful.

Now inasmuch as churches are made up of individuals, as families, and as I am a member of one, I will try by divine help, in all my ways and words, in all my acts and deeds, to be kind, forbearing, forgiving, sympathetic, charitable. I will not aim at high things but condescend to men of low estate. I will help to bear my brother's burdens, to speak a word of hope and cheer to the discouraged, to weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice, to hide the bad and to expose the good.

I will not forget that we are all brethren, of one Father, that we should live in peace and concord, that no one should think himself above another, that there should be no respect of persons, that the rich and the poor meet together in the one fellowship. When the Duke of Wellington attended the Lord's Supper in a village at one time, seeing a poor man about to rise from his side when he saw who he was, he said kindly, "Stay, friend, we are all brethren here." This feeling, however, should live and operate beyond the table of the Lord. We are brethren wherever we are, and brotherly kindness and charity should be ready to lend a helping hand in the street, in the trade, and at all times when required.

MAKE us of one heart and mind, Courteous, pitiful, and kind, Lowly, meek in thought and word, Altogether like our Lord. Let us for each other care, Each the other's burden bear; To Thy church the pattern give: Show how true believers live.

April 21st.

AM I carnally minded and subject to death, or spiritually minded and living to God?—

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.—Rom. viii. 5-8.

THE things of the flesh," that is, things which are in man's unrenewed and unsanctified nature, and which proceed from it, viz., evil thoughts, affections, imaginations, desires, words, tempers, purposes, acts, works. If I mind these, that is, think of them, delight in them, and hold them as preferable to the things of the Spirit, then, undoubtedly, I am "carnally minded."

If, on the contrary, my mind is regenerated by the Spirit of truth and purity, and its thoughts, desires, affections, pursuits, and enjoyments are in and among the things of God, and especially those which are in Christ Jesus ; then am I "spiritually minded," and I have "life and peace."

Spiritual things live in me as before carnal things, and I live in them in the luxury of peace, as before I was in death and at enmity with God. Storms from without may rage against me ; I have peace. Wars and rumours of wars may be all around ; I have peace. The world's tribulations may toss me about as a cork on the waters ; I have peace, like Jesus in the vessel on the Galilean lake, when the boisterous winds and surging seas rolled against it. I live in the "God of all peace." Christ is my Peace. The peace that passeth all understanding keeps my heart and mind.

Death may reign around in the ungodly ; I have life. Death may seize my body and give it to corruption ; I have life, which will bloom in immortality. I have life in Christ, life in His Spirit, life growing, active, happy, useful ; the life of faith, hope, and love ; life, larger than this world, richer and nobler than the life of earthly lords and princes. I reign in life through righteousness. O the life which is the emanation of spiritual-mindedness !

O Lord, may I evermore have this life and peace, and nevermore have that death of the carnal mind, in which I cannot please Thee !

JESUS, my life ! Thyself apply, Thy Holy Spirit breathe ;
My vile affections crucify, conform me to Thy death ;
That all-comprising peace bestow on me, through grace forgiven,
The life of holiness below, and then the life of heaven.

April 22nd.

WHAT is my usual disposition under provocation, temptation, and the various adverse things of life?—

In your patience possess your souls.—Luke xxi. 19.

Ye have need of patience.—Heb. x. 36.

Let patience have her perfect work.—Jas. i. 4.

The patience of the saints.—Rev. xiii. 10.

THIS is a world of tribulation and trial. No one is exempt from them. However they are borne by us, they come. They do not ask us how they shall come or how they will be received. It is our lot to have them, and we must bear them as best we can. Complaining under a burden never makes the burden lighter, but rather increases it in proportion to our complaint.

Two men were in Christian fellowship. One of them spoke of his heavy trials and afflictions. The other spoke of his also, but, he said, "I have a secret, brother, by which I make my troubles much lighter than they otherwise would be." "Pray do tell me what it is; I should like to know it." "Well, brother, if you must know, it is *Patience*."

"Patience," says Bishop Horne, "strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, tramples upon temptation, endures persecutions, consummates martyrdom."

A noble virtue is patience, and makes everyone noble that exercises it. What made the army of martyrs "noble" but their patience? See the dignity of the Apostles in their patience! Behold the magnanimity of the divine Sufferer in patience! "I must not complain," said one dying from cancer in the throat, "I suffer much pain, but I have more joy. I have everything to be thankful for. God has been very good to me all my life, and now I know He loves me." Beautiful patience.

Queen Anne Boleyn nobly met her doom with patience. "From being a private gentlewoman," she said, "the king made me a marchioness; from a marchioness, he made me a queen; and now he hath left no higher degree of earthly honour for me, he hath made me a martyr."

For Thy Name's sake, for Thy Truth's sake, O Lord, may I be patient to endure anything Satan, the world, or even Thyself shalt bring upon me!

PATIENT make me, Lord, in sorrow,
Patient in all pain and grief;
When the blessings of to-morrow
May to me bring sweet relief.

April 23rd.

Is my faith a dead, or a living, operative faith?—

Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.—Jas. ii. 17, 18.

WHATEVER faith I have, if it has no life, it is practically of no more use to me and society than a dead man in his grave, or a dead tree in an orchard. I may carry a watch about with me, but if it does not go, it cannot tell me the time of day. I may have hoarded a sum of money, but it is doing no good there, any more than a heap of rubbish in a field. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." One talent in active service is more profitable than five "hid in a napkin." I have heard men talk about plans for the building of houses, the construction of engines, the tunnelling of mountains, and many other wonderful things, but I have never seen anything accomplished until they or their employes have *set to work*. Faith in science, art, commerce, social and family life, is essential; but it is only in proportion to its working power in each that its benefits are realized. All the marvels of the age are the *works* of faith.

These thoughts will apply to me and to every Christian. That I am *called* a Christian is nothing. That I *say* I have faith is nothing. If there is life in a body, it breathes, it sees, it handles, it walks, it works. So my faith; if it has life, it gives the evidences of life, which I feel myself and which others observe. In proportion to its application and exercise in the invisible things of God will be my realization of their benefits. Being in me "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen," I shall live and move and work in connection with them and in the midst of them, as I do in connection with and in the midst of the things which are seen and temporal. I shall no more doubt that I have a soul than that I have a body. I shall believe in a future state as I believe in a coming year. I shall work out my salvation from sin as I work out my salvation from want and poverty. I shall labour to build up the moral well-being of man as I labour to build up his social and material. Thus I shall show my faith in the spiritual world by works as I show my faith in the physical.

O God, forgive my unbelief. Help me to quicken my faith. Strengthen the divine life in me that my faith may be strong, and the works of my faith more obvious to myself and to others.

CHRISTIAN works are no more than
Animate faith and love, as flowers are the
Animate spring-tide.

April 24th.

HAVE I not always something to thank God for?—

I will extol Thee, my God, O King, and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever.—Ps. cxlv. 1.

Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.—Ps. cxlvii. 1.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.—Ps. ciii. 2.

I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.—Ps. ci. 1.

A MINISTER, in his usual pastoral calls, saw a member of his church who was in a complaining mood. Things went hard with her. In fact, all things were against her. She had little to be thankful for.

The minister pointed out to her two things at least for which she should be thankful, viz., good health and a good husband.

"Yes," she said, "I have them."

"Now, then," replied the pastor, "I want you in your prayers every day to thank God for these two great blessings."

The woman promised to do so.

Some time after, the minister called again. As he approached the door he heard cheerful singing in the house. He had never heard the like before there. He wondered what it meant. He knocked at the door, which was opened by the good woman, with a countenance lighted up with joy.

"I am glad to hear you singing, Mrs. J——," said the minister.

"Oh, yes, sir," she replied, "I feel very happy now. I'm very much obliged to you for teaching me to thank God for those two mercies. But you see, sir, when I began with thanking God for my good health and my good husband, I found I couldn't stop there. I had to thank Him for my good children, and then for my good home. Then I had to thank Him for teaching me to know Him, and love Him, and for giving me the hope of heaven when I die. And now, when I begin to thank Him, I find so many mercies for which to praise Him, that I hardly know where to stop."

O Lord, may I praise Thee in the clouds as well as in the sunshine, and sing of Thy judgments as well as of Thy goodness. May my days of praise never end, as Thy lovingkindness endureth through all generations.

HAPPY are the souls that praise Him, as the spirits up on high:
As the lark sings in the sunshine, mounting upward in the sky.
It revives the drooping spirit praises of our God to sing,
Scatter gloom and midnight darkness, comfort to the bosom bring.

April 25th.

IN drawing near to God, my heavenly Father, do I consider what is the most acceptable offering that I can present to Him?—

Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—1 Sam. xv. 22.

But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—Heb. xiii. 16.

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.—Ps. lxxix. 30, 31.

IT is usual for one, when contemplating the making of a present to a friend, to consider what will be most suitable. As a rule, that which is thought to be most in harmony with his character is chosen. Sometimes the person himself will specify the kind of present he would like.

So as regards presents to God. In the prophet Micah's day the question was asked, "Wherewithall shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offering, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 6, 7.)

The response to this inquiry was, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Here, then, I have the sum of the whole matter as to what is the most acceptable offering to bring to God. I am not left to choose; He specifies Himself what He requires. He is not a *poor* God to need my money. He is not a *vain* God to need my gilded wares or flatteries. He is not a *heathen* God to require the "fruit of my body for the sin of my soul." He is not the world's God to need my bribes, my feasts, or my patronage. He is a God of justice, truth, mercy, and purity; and what will be most acceptable to Him is my heart and life, moving and acting in harmony with Himself. As a Father, nothing pleases Him more than the offerings of His children's obedience on the altar of pure affection. What are words, or forms, or ceremonies, or ritual to Him, without doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with Him?

WHOE'ER to Thee themselves approve
Must take the path Thy word hath showed;
Justice pursue and mercy love,
And humbly walk by faith with God.

April 26th.

DO I punctually and regularly attend to the duty of secret prayer?—

Enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, Who seeth in secret; and thy Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. vi. 6.

He (Jesus) went up into a mountain to pray; and when the evening was come, He was there alone.—Matt. xiv. 23.

ARE there not as many instances in the Scriptures of private prayers and public answers as of public prayers and public answers? God is not a God requiring pomp and display from His worshippers; nor does He, as a rule, reply to His suppliants in ways and forms to dazzle or to alarm. The “still, small voice” reaches His ear as easily and quickly as the loud rushing voice; so His answers in the still small voice reach the heart of His Elijahs as readily as the noise of the whirlwind and the earthquake.

Praying at the corner of streets to be heard or seen of men; gorgeous and æsthetical displays of ministerial or priestly ceremonies, robes, incense, and genuflexions; loud-sounding timbrels, drums, organs, and musical instruments, are all vanity to Him. It is like empty adulation and flattering eulogiums offered to a man of self-respect and common-sense. All this is too much after the heathen to harmonize with the Christian. It is too sensuous to be spiritual. God seeth in secret and rewardeth openly.

To pray to God most acceptably and effectually I must go into my closet and exclude myself from public observation, if not knowledge, and exclude the world from myself. There, in the depths of my soul’s sincerity, humility, reverence, and love, I must worship my Father; and my Father, Who searches my heart and sees all its motives and desires, will hear me and reward me openly. He will show to others that though I have not worshipped as the Pharisees, at the corner of the streets to be seen of men, I am blest more than the Pharisees; I have touched a hidden spring which they have not, that has sent forth its living stream to refresh and fructify my life.

“A man,” says Brooks, “whose soul is conversant with God in a closet, in a hole, behind the door, or in a desert, a den, a dungeon, shall find more real pleasure, more choice delight, and more full content, than in the palace of a prince.”

EVEN as Elias mounting to the sky
Did cast his mantle to the earth behind,
So, when the heart presents the prayer on high,
Exclude the world from traffic with the mind.

April 27th.

AS one whose citizenship is in heaven, have I a rejoicing assurance that my name is written in the Lamb's book of life?—

Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.—Luke x. 20.

A book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels, and I will spare him as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.—Mal. iii. 16, 17.

I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.—Rev. iii. 5.

IT was customary in ancient times to keep in a city a register of the names of those who were its citizens. Wherever any one's name was written, if not in this register, he was no denizen of this city. So, it seems, it is as regards the city of God which is in the heavens. They who are already its citizens by regeneration and adoption, have their names written in its register, called "The Lamb's book of life"; and this should be to them a matter of greater rejoicing than a power to work miracles or the possession of all earth's riches and honours.

I may have my name written in a church record; it may be inscribed in the register of the imperial city of an empire, giving me a right to all its immunities; it may be written in the baptismal, marriage, or family register; it may be chiselled on the foundation or top stone of a temple of the Lord; it may be blazoned among the great names of poets, philosophers, or statesmen; but to have my name "written in heaven," is to me an occasion of richer joy and a guarantee of more enduring glory than all those combined would be. What were they to me when death and time had blotted them out? But my citizenship in heaven, with its unspeakable privileges, will be as lasting as heaven itself.

This, O Lord, is what I covet before anything else, to have from Thy Spirit the inward assurance that I am a citizen of heaven. With this in my bosom I fear no evil, I give way to no trial, I yield to no power of the enemy, as I travel through the wilderness to take possession of my inheritance. I think little of the roughness of the way, but much of the pleasantness of the end. Onward I go, with rejoicing and glory in my song. Sorrow and sighing flee away in prospect of joining the general assembly and church of the first-born. With my name written in the "book of life," and the divine assurance of it in my heart, I need not doubt an admission into heaven when I arrive at its gates.

INSCRIBING with the city's name,

The heavenly new Jerusalem,
To me the victor's title give,
Among Thy glorious saints to live;
And all their happiness to know,
A citizen of heaven below.

April 28th.

A *M* I sufficiently awake to the dangers of worldly prosperity, and do I watch and pray against them?—

In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.—Job. xv. 21.

In my prosperity I said I shall never be moved.—Ps. xxx. 6.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.—Prov. i. 32.

PROSPERITY may be a blessing or a curse. This depends upon the way in which it comes and is received, and the use that is made of it. I speak now of the prosperity of the righteous. The probability of its being a curse is greater than of its being a blessing, as obesity is a greater danger to health than leanness. I have known many men that have been anxious for prosperity and prayed and laboured for it; but how few are indifferent about it or even pray against its dangers.

The Rev. W. Jay was once preaching in Bristol, when among other requests which he had for prayer was one from a member of the congregation that was prospering in trade. Such a request is as rare as an angel's visit.

Prosperity in learning, in power, in knowledge, in popularity, in usefulness, yea, even in holiness, has its dangers as well as prosperity in trade. Prosperity has ruined more Christians than adversity.

Prosperity has a way of blinding the eyes as to its dangers and opening them as to its blessings; at the same time, it flatters its subject as to the excellence of the abilities which have secured it. Its tendency is to inflate with pride and vanity:—"My wisdom, my industry, my powers, my tact, my perseverance, have gained me all these things." It will, if not watched, gradually close the Bible for the ledger; go to concerts, balls, theatres, rather than the house of God; lock the closet door of devotion outside, pull down the family altar, turn itself into selfishness, prefer the society of worldlings to that of God's people, become ambitious, self-conscious, dictatorial, and tyrannical. It will dress in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day, look higher than the poor and despised saints of God, from among whom it started in its career, and find its congenial society only with the men of this world.

My God! either suffer me not to have prosperity, or deliver me from its appalling dangers!

BEWARE—because the sun shines brightly,
Because the flowers are fair;
Thus bright, thus gay, were bowers of Eden,
While danced that fruit in air,
And waved o'er Eve's uplifted brow—
As like o'er thee is waving now.

April 29th.

IS it not a comfort for me to believe in God's PARTICULAR providence?—

Thou tellest my wanderings; put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?—Ps. lvi. 8.

The very hairs of your head are all numbered.—Matt. x. 30.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.—Ps. xxxiv. 7.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.—Isa. xlix. 16.

IF each individual would do as Dr. Doddridge, keep a register of the most remarkable circumstances and events of his life, and review it, say, at the close of every year, he would have many reasons suggested why he should believe in a special providence, and see special causes for gratitude to Him Who is its supreme Ruler and Guide.

A converted Indian was once attacked by a savage neighbour, who presented his gun to his head, saying, "Now, I'll shoot you, for you speak of nothing but Jesus." The man replied, "If Jesus does not permit it, you cannot shoot me." The savage, struck with this answer, dropped his gun and went away in silence.

Thus it is that the Father of each takes care of each. If He "permit," or not permit, is the law controlling all men and all things as regards His children who love Him. If He takes care of sparrows, and not one falls to the ground without Him, can I not trust Him to take care of *me*? Shall a father feed his fowl in the yard and not his children who bear his name and sit at his table? "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are but dust." "There is no want to them that fear the Lord."

It is to me a refreshing and comforting reflection that God knows all my motives, thoughts, feelings, dispositions, likings, strength, weakness, joys, sorrows, hopes, temptations, and infirmities; that He interests Himself in all my anxieties, trials, and vexations; that He numbers the very hairs of my head and the cubits of my stature; that He compasses me about, bears me in His arms, and takes me up and sets me down; He hears my voice, notes my very countenance, and tells the beating of my pulse; that, in fact, He cares for me and thinks of me, and loves me more than I care for, or think of, or love myself. Blessed be His Name!

LEAD us, Heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea:
Guide us, guard us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee.

April 30th.

DO I conform to the world in anything which is directly or indirectly contrary to the precepts of Christ?—

Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Rom. xii. 2.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this : To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.—Jas. i. 27.

THE world is a "vain show." All that is in the world is the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Then, shall I conform myself to them? Not unless I am *blinded* by the "god of this world," or bribed by him with false promises, as he tempted Jesus with the offer of the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," if He would fall down and worship him (Matt. iii.); or unless I am led away by the "error of the wicked." With my spiritual senses awake and in exercise, under the light of heaven, I shall never conform myself to this evil world.

What! a follower of Jesus, Who was not of this world, turn from Him to follow the world, which mocked Him, despised Him, rejected Him, maligned Him, falsely accused Him, spat upon Him, and crucified Him; to follow the world, which now rejects Him, ignores Him, persecutes His prophets, and which would sell Him for an old shoe latchet, not to say a few pieces of silver; which ridicules and imprisons Him in His followers; shall I conform myself to such a world as this?

Heaven forbid! Everlasting dishonour be on my head to do such a thing! I should be worse than Demas, Judas, or Satan himself if I did so. No, I renounce the world, as it renounces my Lord; I tread upon it, as it treads upon Him; I crucify it to myself, as it crucified Him to itself. Dead, dead, be thou to me, O world! Shall I cast off my white linen of the saints to put on thy filthy rags of iniquity? Shall I give up perfection in Christ for thy impurities, thy hollow joys, thy empty pleasures, thy fading beauties, thy deceitful shows? Shall I leave the fountain of living waters, clear as crystal, to drink of thy turbid streams of sin and death?

Blessed Jesus! Thou shalt be to me more than all the world. To Thee I desire to be conformed. O make me in Thy image shine!

FOR the world's love we live not, its hate we defy,
And we will not be led by the throng;
We'll be true to ourselves, to our Father on high,
And the bright world to which we belong!

Good Friday.

I ask'd the heavens :—" What foe to God hath done
This unexampled deed ?"—The heavens exclaim
" 'Twas Man ;—and we in horror snatch'd the sun
From such a spectacle of guilt and shame."
I ask'd the sea :—the sea in fury boil'd,
And answer'd with his voice of storms :—" 'Twas Man—
My waves in panic at his crime recoil'd,
Disclos'd the abyss—and from the centre ran."
I ask'd the earth : the earth replied, aghast,
" 'Twas Man : and such strange pangs my bosom rent,
That still I groan and shudder at the past."
—To Man—gay, smiling, thoughtless Man—I went,
And ask'd him next ;—*He* turn'd a scornful eye,
Shook his proud head, and deign'd me no reply.

J. Montgomery.

My trust is in the Cross, there lies my rest,
My fast, my sole delight ;
Let cold-mouthed Boreas or the hot-mouthed East
Blow till they burst with spite ;
Let earth and hell conspire their worst, their best,
And join their twisted might ;
Let showers of thunderbolts dart round and round me,
And troops of fiends surround me :
All this may well confront ; all this shall ne'er confound me.

Quarles.

My soul is caught :
Heaven's sovereign blessings, clustering from the Cross,
Rush on her in a throng, and close her round,
The prisoner of amaze !—In His bless'd life
I see the path, and, in His death, the price,
And in His great ascent, the proof supreme,
Of Immortality.

Young.

The Cross once seen is death to every vice :
Else He that died there suffered all His pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died, in vain.

Cowper.

Easter Sunday.

Alleluia ! Alleluia !

Hearts to heaven and voices raise :
Sing to God a hymn of gladness,
Sing to God a hymn of praise ;
He, Who on the cross a victim
For the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
Now is risen from the dead.

Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
Of the holy harvest field,
Which will all its full abundance
At His second coming yield ;
Then the golden ears of harvest
Will their heads before Him wave,
Ripened by His glorious sunshine
From the furrows of the grave.

Christ is risen, we are risen ;
Shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory,
From the brightness of Thy face :
That we, with our hearts in heaven
Here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel-hands be gathered,
And be ever, Lord, with Thee.

Wordsworth.

Up, and away,
Thy Saviour's gone before ;
Why dost thou stay,
Dull soul ? Behold the door
Is open, and His precepts bid thee rise,
Whose power has vanquished all thine enemies.

Open thine eyes,
Sin-seized soul, and see
What cobweb ties
They are that trammel thee ;
Not profit, pleasure, honours, as thou thinkest,
But loss, pain, shame, at which thou vainly winkest.

All that is good
Thy Saviour dearly bought
With His heart's blood,
And it must there be sought,
Where He keeps residence, Who rose this day :
Linger no longer, then ; up, and away !

Herbert.

May 1st.

IS there an all-round consistency between my Christian belief and practice?—

Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?—Rom. ii. 21-23.

DO I believe in the Supreme Being, with all His claims upon my love and service, yet practically love and serve myself more than Him; or worship idols of my own imagination; or think more of the world than of Him; or attach more importance to the interests of my business than to the growth and development of His kingdom in the earth? Do I believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of man, and that no one can be saved except through Him, yet practically trust in myself that I am righteous, and “despise others,” and go about to establish my own righteousness, not submitting myself to the righteousness of God? Do I believe in the Holy Ghost as the Divine Agent of spiritual illumination, conviction, and sanctification, yet practically depend upon priestly teaching, and the virtue of baptism, and holy communion, with fasts and feasts? Do I believe in the Scriptures as the only rule of faith, yet trust in the *Church*, that is, the ministry and tradition, for an interpretation of them?

Do I believe in the law of God as “holy, just, and good,” and that it is the only authoritative standard of moral living, and yet practically say, if I live according to my conscience in all things I shall not go far wrong? Do I believe in the forgiveness of sins and the communion of saints, yet practically live without the enjoyment of either? Do I believe in the realities of a future state, yet conduct myself as though this life was the limitation of my being?

If these things are so with me, then what is my religion more than hypocrisy or self-righteousness? It is like the coin of Alexandria, which is said to have appeared beautiful to the eyes, though made of the basest of metals. Such religion is anything but pleasing to God or satisfactory to the conscience. It is like blowing hot and cold, or like looking one way and going another. It is acknowledging Jehovah, but following Baal.

From all such religion, good Lord, deliver me!

THUS, dishonouring not her station,
Would my life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine consistency.

May 2nd.

IS it as well with me now as in days gone by?—

Oh that I were as in months past, as in days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness!—Job. xxix. 2, 3.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?—Gal. iv. 15.

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth.—Gal. v. 7.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.—Rev. iii. 15.

A MAN weak in body may call to mind the days when he had strength equal to any work he was called to do. Another man in ill-health may remember the days when his appetite would relish anything that was wholesome; when to meet with his friends was a delight; when, in fact, all his associations in life were agreeable and pleasant. But how changed now!

There are times when corresponding experience comes to a Christian in his spiritual life. Under a sense of his "leanness rising up in him bearing witness to his face" (Job xvi. 8) he cries out, "Oh that I were as in months past, as in days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness" (Job xxix. 2, 3); when I loved the house of God and His word; when I rejoiced all the day long in the light of His countenance; when work for God was joy in God; when all things combined to contribute to my growth in grace. Why is it not so now? Ah, why? Do you not know, my brother?

Is this so with *me*? Then I will find out the cause by searching, if I know it not; yea, I will ask my God to find it out, if I cannot. Whatever it is, I must have it removed, so that I die not. There is balm in Gilead, there is a Physician there, and the health of my soul may be recovered. My God asks me to return to Him, giving me the promise that He will heal my backslidings and love me freely. Shall I foolishly keep from Him? Shall I mourn my lost blessedness when I may recover it? Shall I pine in my leanness when I may "flourish like the palm tree?" Shall I die of sheer weakness when I may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might?

Now, O my God, restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation. Uphold me with Thy free Spirit, and lead me in the way everlasting!

TAKE courage, then, my trembling soul,
One look from Christ will make thee whole;
Trust thou in Him; 'tis not in vain,
But wait and look, and look again.

May 3rd.

IS it right for me, as a true follower of Jesus, to wrap myself in the robes of wealth, to feed my eyes with the "pride of life," and complete for myself the measure of this world's elegancies, while the cause of Christ and His poor are languishing for such support as I am able to give?—

They lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall: they chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David. They drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: *but they are not grieved at the affliction of Joseph.*—Amos vi. 3 6.

I DO not sufficiently think of the things involved in the above question and text; if I did, should I not feel and act differently in respect to them? It is to be feared many more are like me in this regard. But this is no justification for my being so. Doubtless there are thousands who indulge themselves in every form of luxury, while Christ's cause and His poor languish for the means of support. But this should not affect me as to *my* duty. If one spend a pound in waste, that is no reason why I should spend a penny. If my Christian neighbour gives so much less than he *might*, that he may have the more to spend on worldly gratifications, I am not responsible. He must bear his own burden. He must give an account of himself to God. It is for me to take heed to myself in this as in all other things. Still, if by acting up to my duty in this or any other way I can influence one so much above me in this life to act on the Scripture principle of Christian giving, I have done something that will benefit others as well as him.

Beneficence brings its own reward. In 1871, when the Commune were spreading devastation and ruin in Paris, they came to George Moore's warehouse to set it on fire. They were told it belonged to the "Anglais" who had brought food to the starving people, and they spared it from ruin. At the end of every year Mr. Moore wrote in his pocket book, "What I spent I had: what I saved I lost: what I gave I have."

O Lord, give me Thy Holy Spirit to help me; for without Him my poor human nature will go on in its old way of sordidness and pleasure-taking, whatever may be the teachings of Thy word, or of my own conscience.

WE lose what on ourselves we spend!
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all!

May 4th.

DO I follow my calling in life to glorify God?—

—And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men.
—Col. iii. 23.

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.
—John iv. 34.

A BIRD follows its instinct in fulfilling the end of its existence. A horse follows the guidance of man and not its instinct. But man, while in some things he is influenced by instinct, and in many instances is subject to man in his daily calling, has within himself that which is under *his own control*, and should govern him as to the spirit in which he does his work and the ultimate object for which he does it. As the highest sentient being on earth, he should do his work on the highest principle, and for the highest end; that is, to glorify Him who has endowed him with his powers, and called him to use them in ways appropriate to his position and the well-being of his race.

I thank the Author of all things for making me man. I thank Him for the service of which He has made me capable, although it may be one below many others. Epaminondas, a noble Theban, was once selected by his enemies to be the city scavenger of Thebes, with a view to disgrace him. But instead of taking it as it was intended, he said, "If the office will not give me honour, I will give honour to the office." Thus, if my calling is the lowest in the sphere of labour, I may dignify it by the spirit and manner in which I attend to it. The lowest, honest toil, as well as suffering, shame, and the cross, have been consecrated by the Man of Nazareth. A chimney sweep doing his work truly and well is more respectable than a gentleman loungeur. If I fulfil my calling in the fear of God and to the best of my ability, I am on a level in this respect with a philosopher or a statesman, or even an archangel, who does the same; and if he does not I am above him.

O Thou Almighty and Omnipresent Worker, Who by Thy working hast made all things, and dost by working in them maintain them in being, and dost cause each and all so to work as to fulfil Thy purposes, do Thou so guide and help me that I may please Thee in all I do!

ALL may of Thee partake: Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture (for Thy sake) Will not grow bright and clean,
As servant with this clause, Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws, Makes that and the action fine.

May 5th.

DO I know that the Christian's warfare is life-long?—

I delight in the law of God after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.—Rom. vii. 22.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. ii. 10.

THE Christian's warfare is not over in one conflict. From the moment he enlists as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus until the moment he is called to receive his final reward the warfare continues in some form or other, at one time or other. It may not be always equally hot and fierce, nor always with the same foes, but it never ceases while he is in the plains of mortality.

"In the market-place," says Dr. Shedd, "in the house of God, in the privacy of the closet, in the intercourse of the household, how incessantly is the temptation presenting itself, and how constantly by the grace of God is it repulsed ! Sometimes the wish arises that the temptations of this earthly course might be concentrated, and that the destiny of the soul might be decided by a single terrible conflict, instead of by slow, pertinacious, life-long warfare. The acquisition of holiness and heaven by a renewed man resembles the ancient wars which were prolonged sometimes for more than a generation. The Dorians of Laconia fought severely for six years with the Dorians of Messenia for the supremacy of that little patch of earth the Peloponnesus. The Roman contended thirty years with the Samnite for the possession of Italy, and forty years with the Carthaginian for the dominion of the world. And the Christian fights his fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil, not in a day or a year, but through all his days and all his years."

Be it so ; then, I will in divine strength face the conflict and be faithful unto death. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me." If I show myself *willing* to stand firm in resisting evil and following that which is good, He *will* help me to the end. He resisted even unto blood and conquered. He will help me even to that point, if I need it. May I fight to overcome sin, to keep down selfishness, pride, passions, evil desires ; to win Christ and be found in Him at the last ; to reach heaven and its endless bliss !

O Thou Captain of my salvation, Thyself "made perfect through suffering," under Thy command and protection I will hope unto the end !

THERE he fights,
And then obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,
And never-withering wreaths, compared with which
The laurels that a Caesar reaps are weeds.

May 6th.

DO I so pass through my trials in life that they are a means of advancing me to a higher state of Christian excellence?—

When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.—Job xxiii. 10.

He shall set as a refiner and purifier of silver . . . and shall purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.—Mal. iii. 3.

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter i. 7.

MADAME Guyon was a young person of remarkable beauty, and about twenty-two years old, when she was seized with that terrible disease, small-pox. She gives her account of its results upon her in the following words: "Before I fell under this disease, I resembled those animals destined for slaughter, which, on certain days, they adorn with greens and flowers, and bring in pomp into the city before they kill them. Now my body looked like that of a leper. All who saw me said they had never seen such a shocking spectacle. But the devastation without was counterbalanced by peace within. My soul was kept in a state of contentment greater than can be expressed. Reminded continually of one of the causes of my religious trials and falls, I now indulged the hope of regaining my inward liberty by the loss of that outward beauty, which loss had been my grief. This view of my condition rendered my soul so well satisfied, and so united to God, that it would not have exchanged its condition for that of the happiest prince in the world. . . . As I lay in my bed, suffering the total deprivation of that which had been a snare to my pride, I experienced a joy unspeakable. I praised God in profound silence. . . . And I did not hesitate to say to those who expressed their regret and sympathy, that I rejoiced at that in which they found so much cause of lamentation. . . . I was no longer what I once was. . . . My heavenly Father had not been unfaithful in His work, but had ordered the sacrifice in all its reality. . . . There was something in my heart which said, IF I WOULD HAVE HAD THEE FAIR, I WOULD HAVE LEFT THEE AS THOU WAST. As soon as I was able, I did not hesitate to go into the streets and places where I had been accustomed to go previously, in order that my humiliation might triumph in the very places where my unholy pride had been exalted."

THEE, Jesus, full of truth and grace, Thee, Saviour, I adore,
Thee in affliction's furnace praise, And magnify Thy power;
The fire my graces shall refine, Till, moulded from above,
I bear the character divine, The stamp of perfect love.

May 7th.

WHEN I walk in DARKNESS, do I trust in the guidance of my heavenly Father?—

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.—Isa. l. 10.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life—John viii. 12.

A CHRISTIAN sojourns in the “darkness of this world.” None of its lights of reason, education, science, or philosophy are sufficient to illumine his way to the realms of glorious immortality whither he is going. But while the Christian walks to heaven through the darkness of this world he walks *in light* which is not of this world. He is like a man with a lantern in the night, showing him the way to go, whilst all around him is thick darkness; or like the Israelites in Goshen, who had light in their dwellings when the Egyptians were encompassed with darkness that could be felt.

The light in which the Christian walks is the “true light”—the light of life, of grace, and of love—the light which the darkness of this world cannot comprehend, neither eclipse, not to say, extinguish. He does not carry it in his hand, as a candle or torch, which might be blown out by a sudden gust, but in his heart, well guarded and secured. Christ in him is his light, and following Him in His teachings and example, he shall not stumble, but walk safely, if not joyously.

When it is said a Christian walks in darkness, it refers to certain conditions of his personal faith and experience in relation to divine dispensations towards him. As for instance, when he cannot see why he should have a certain affliction, or a certain loss, or a certain bereavement; or why he should do this or not do that, or when his evidence of acceptance with God is obscured by depression or doubt. But even in this darkness, without light, he can “stay himself,” or lean on the arm of His God, to Whom darkness and light are the same, and He will lead him in the way he should go. With such a Guide, even in the deepest gloom, the Christian may trust himself to be led in the good and right way.

“Thou that leddest Israel like a flock,” I will lean on Thy arm, as on my Beloved, and walk with Thee.

LEAD me, O Father, in the paths of right;
Blindly I stumble when I walk alone,
Involved in shadows of a darksome night,
Only with Thee I journey safely on.

May 8th.

DO I worship God like the publican or like the Pharisee?—

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.— Luke xviii. 11-13.

THE Pharisee goes up to the Temple to pray. He lifts up his eyes to heaven and stretches out his hands to God, and begins his address. It is pronounced in a manner full of self-assurance and satisfaction. What a prayer! How full of pride, arrogancy, presumption, and calumny! What was in his prayer was in his heart. Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. Usually whatever inordinate affection rules the soul at other times will intrude upon it in prayer, and if conscious and awake it will destroy its value. We have need, therefore, to mark this well. What did this Pharisee obtain? All that he asked for—nothing! He went to God full and came away empty. He chanted his own praises and shut heaven's gates against him. May I not be an imitator of that Pharisee!

The publican also goes up to the Temple to pray. He draws near with silent step. He stands afar off from a sense of his unworthiness. Let me do that in my sense of unworthiness, while through the blood of Jesus I "draw nigh." The publican would not lift up his eyes to heaven. That is the attitude I would take when I think of my sins; but with Jesus as my Advocate in the heavens I may look up with eyes of hope and faith. The publican smote upon his breast as though he would strike punishment to the heart from which had issued so much sin in his life. How much more should I smite upon my breast! The publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That is my prayer, for I am a sinner and need mercy. God alone can give me the mercy I need. I may come boldly to the throne of grace and obtain it. God is ready to forgive. The publican went to his home "justified rather than the other, and exalted into the favour of God. So may I!

In following in spirit the publican rather than the Pharisee, may I take care that I do not degenerate into a Pharisee, and become proud even of my humility and penitence!

BROKEN heart and downcast eyes
Dare not lift themselves to Thee,
Yet Thou canst interpret sighs:
"God be merciful to me!"

May 9th.

HAVE I honestly and fully, without keeping back any part, laid myself at the feet of my Lord and Master, for Him to receive and to do with me whatsoever He please?—

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. —Rom. xiv. 7-9.

THE Rev. Alfred Cookman gives in the following words an account of his dedication to God :—" Kneeling by myself, I brought an entire consecration to the altar. But someone will say, ' Had you not done that at the time of your conversion ? ' I answer, ' Yes ! but with this difference : then I brought powers dead in trespasses and sins, now I would consecrate powers permeated with the new life of regeneration, I would offer myself a living sacrifice ; then I gave myself away, but now, with the increased illumination of the Spirit, I felt that my surrender was more intelligent and specific and careful—it was my hands, my feet, my senses, my attributes of mind and heart, my hours, my energies, my reputation, my worldly substance, my everything, without reservation or limitation. Then I was anxious for pardon, but now my desire and faith compassed something more : I wanted the conscious presence of the Sanctifier in my heart. Carefully consecrating everything, I covenanted with my own heart and with my heavenly Father that this entire but unworthy offering should remain upon the altar, and henceforth I would please God by believing that the altar (Spirit) sanctifieth the gift. Do you ask what was the immediate effect ? I answer, Peace, a broad, deep, full, satisfying, and sacred peace. This proceeded not only from a good conscience before God, but likewise from the presence and operation of the Spirit in my heart. Still I could not say that I was entirely sanctified, except as I had sanctified myself to God." I am the Lord's. He has bought me with His heart's blood. If I keep myself from Him I am a " thief and a robber." In yielding, therefore, myself to Him, I am only giving Him back *His own*.

Blessed Jesus, it is great mercy on Thy part to receive me, after keeping myself from Thee so long !

THINE for ever ! God of love,
Hear me from Thy throne above ;
Thine for ever may I be,
Here and in eternity !

May 10th.

AM I in any degree influenced by the spirit of bigotry?—

Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord are these.
—Jer. vii. 4.

And John said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.—Luke ix. 49-50.

But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.—Luke ix. 55.

WHO would have thought that it was the “disciple whom Jesus loved,” the “disciple of love,” that uttered the above words. But he spoke them in ignorant zeal for his Master’s interests. But after the Holy Spirit came upon him and revealed to him the true character of the Christ and the nature of His kingdom, he loved all that loved His Lord, and said, “Everyone that loveth, loveth him that is begotten of Him. Little children, love one another.”

So it is that the spirit of a sect is as narrow as the sect; the Spirit of Christ is as broad as His love and truth. To be an Englishman is to belong only to one division of the human race; but to be a *man* is to belong to the world of humanity. So to be an Episcopalian or a Methodist is to belong to one section of the universal church; but to belong to Christ by the union of faith is to be a member of His Body. Here bigotry has no life. It is only as between *human* orders this exists, and it comes not of the Spirit of Christ, but of the world.

“He followeth not with us,” not, he followeth not *Thee*. How bigotry makes its subjects as important as the Master! He followeth not *us*, therefore forbid him to do any good, hold no fellowship with him! Shall we call down fire from heaven to consume him? Blessed be God, the Master is not as the servant. Would God the servant were as the Master! What will it avail in heaven or in hell that I was here of this or that sect? Heaven’s gates are open to everyone that follows Christ. Hell’s gates are open to everyone who follows only the church or its teachers.

O Thou Universal Love, Who dost love with equal affection all who love Thee, save *me* from this spirit of bigotry!

SHALL I ask the brave soldier, who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind, if our creeds disagree?
Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,
If he kneel not before the same altar as me?
No! perish the faith and the laws that would try
Truth, valour, or love, by a standard like this.

May 11th.

DO I feel any rising of envy or jealousy within me, when I see one preferred or promoted before myself, who, in my pride I have thought my inferior?—

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.—Rom. xii. 10.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.—Phi. ii. 3.

Love envieth not.—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.—Gal. v. 26.

IF there is such a spirit in me as is implied in the above question, I would even know it, and knowing it, be ashamed of it before God and man. Envious and jealous of others promoted before me because my pride thinks them my inferiors! Is this the Christian spirit that seeks the lowest place; that looks not on its own, but another's good; that thinks not high things but condescends to men of low estate; that gives up its riches and becomes poor that others through its poverty may become rich?

No, it is the spirit of the world, of self, of Satan. It is the offspring of hell. It is the author of murder. It killed the Christ. It is the calumniator of virtue. It is the filthy slime of the soul. It is the thief of happiness. I renounce and denounce it. I will follow after the Spirit of Him Who was meek and lowly; Who condescended to wash the disciples' feet; Who, though equal with God, made Himself of no reputation, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

This is the spirit that reigns and conquers in the world and in the church. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. This is the spirit that brings equanimity and magnanimity to its possessor. "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; thinketh no evil."

What an excellent spirit is that of love, taking the lowest place, esteeming others better than oneself, doing nothing through strife or vain glory, in honour preferring one another, being kindly affectioned one toward another! Noble spirit! It is of God, and not of the world!

Let this spirit, O Jesus, be in me always; so that I can be at ease, whoever is preferred before me, even as John, when he saw Thee increasing while he was decreasing.

EACH has his gift—
Our souls are organ pipes of divers stop
And various pitch; each with its proper notes
Thrilling beneath the selfsame breath of God,
Though poor alone, yet joined they're harmony.

May 12th.

WHEN I think of the great change in my experience, since my heavenly Father removed His anger from me, and blest me with His favour, do I with heart and voice declare His holy praise?—

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely ; for thine anger is turned away from him.—Hosea xiv. 4.

O Lord, I will praise Thee : though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my Salvation : I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song : He also is become my Salvation.—Isa. xii. 1, 2.

ALL the works of God praise Him, the unseen great in the far-off regions of space and the unseen small in the air or water immediately near. Some have louder and sweeter voices in the concert than others ; but still *all* His works praise Him according to their respective powers, as everything in art, literature, or manufacture, more or less, praises its author.

Thus it is in regard to myself. As a *creature*, I cannot but praise the Lord in unison with all His works. Even if I know Him not, or knowing Him, deny Him, I stand in my place in the universe, and praise Him, as “fearfully and wonderfully made.” I am His workmanship, as is every plant, flower, tree, bird, beast, and fish. If like them I have no voice that speaks to myself of Him, there goes out from me to others the praise of His wisdom and power.

But as a “new creation” in Christ Jesus, I voluntarily and gladly unite all my powers in blessing Him for the marvellous things of love that He has done for me and given to me. When I think of the horrible pit and miry clay from which He has lifted me, and the Rock on which He has established my goings ; when I think of how He saved my feet from falling into hell, and my eyes from tears of dark despair ; when I think of the black cloud of His anger under which I was so terrified and alarmed which He has turned away, and the light of His favour that He has lifted upon me : then it is in the pent-up fullness of my grateful loving heart I exclaim, “O Lord, I will praise Thee, for though Thou wast angry with me Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my Salvation : I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation.”

HAPPY soul who sees the day, The glad day of Gospel grace !

Thee, my Lord (thou then wilt say) Thee will I for ever praise ;
Though Thy wrath against me burned, Thou dost comfort me again ;
All Thy wrath aside is turned ; Thou hast blotted out my sin.

May 13th.

AM I considerate of the "little ones" in Christ's family, lest by any means I offend one of them?—

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.—Matt. xviii. 10, 6.

IN almost every family there are at one time or other "little ones," who have to be considered in their littleness of stature, knowledge, and experience, by the elders of the household. To deal with these as those who are of "full age," would show want of tenderness, kindness, and brotherly consideration.

Likewise in the Church of Christ there are "little ones," not, it may be, in stature, but in age in the spiritual life. They are *babes* in Christ, and, as babes, are weak, inexperienced, ignorant ; still, like all babes to their mothers, they are dear to Christ. He thinks much of them, as promising better things to come ; He carries them in His arms, He nourishes them in His bosom, He feeds them with the sincere milk of His own word. Hence if an elder brother is harsh in his judgment of their failings, is censorious in his spirit towards them, impatient in his treatment of them, speaks unkindly to them, and, in general, deals with them in a way to offend or to injure them, he commits a wrong which is almost unpardonable. If the blossom is nipped by the frost, the fruit is affected. Stunt the plant, the tree is dwarfed. Spoil the child, spoil the man, The words of Solomon have an application here : "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Whether the "little ones" in the family of Christ are those young in years or young in grace, they must not be offended so as to be "turned out of the way." "Of such are the kingdom of heaven," in new-born innocence, humility, meekness, sweetness, beauty, and God-likeness.

Therefore it is that I must be mindful of the "tender lambs," and take care that I offend not one of them, but as an elder brother join with the Father in nursing and training them until they become of mature age, men in Christ, strong in the Lord, and not moved from their hope in the Gospel.

HE folds the lambs within His arm
That they may feel their safety there ;
And threatens those who do them harm,
And gives them to His people's care.

May 14th.

DO I limit the ability and willingness of God to answer prayer by the extent of my asking and thinking?—

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.—Eph. iii. 20, 21.

The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.—Eph. i. 19.

He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.—Rom. viii. 32.

MY asking anything of God has a limitation; and though my thinking may far exceed my asking, that also has a limitation. But God is able to go beyond my limitation in either case, "exceeding abundantly, according to the power that worketh in us."

I cannot comprehend the power which worketh in a seed of wheat to develop it from its germ through all its various stages into full corn in the ear, any more than I can comprehend the power that develops a world from its beginning to its completion. Neither can I comprehend the power of God that worketh in me. Whatever that power is in its extent and operations, according to it God is able to do for me both as to kind and degree. The power that works in me, like that which works in a daisy or in a world, is equal to the progress of my soul to perfection, or perfection could not be reached, and both the power and perfection would be failures.

While, then, I cannot ask or think to the extent of the power that worketh in me, I may ask God to grant me those blessings which shall harmonize with this inworking power to bring me on to perfection in Him. The will of God is my perfection, as it is of all things. To accomplish this His will and power, with such means as He may please to use, effectually combine: in this is the end of my calling in Christ.

While, then, there may be limitation to my asking and thinking, there need not be limitation to the *things* which God gives, only as there is limitation in the power that worketh in me; and only God knows what that is.

I will not, therefore, sin against God by measuring His ability to give according to my asking or thinking.

Blessed Father, Thou art the King Almighty, and I can never ask too much for Thee to give!

FAR more than I can ask or think
My God is able to bestow;
He limits not His gracious gifts
By what I think or what I know.

May 15th.

AM I strictly conscientious in all my monetary and business transactions, so as not to lay myself truthfully open to the smallest charge of dishonesty or injustice?—

We trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.—Heb. xiii. 18.

IN Abraham Lincoln's youthful days he was a storekeeper's clerk. Once after he had sold a woman a parcel of goods and received the money, he found, on looking over the account again, that she had given him six and a quarter cents too much. The money burned in his hands until he had locked the shop and started on a walk of several miles in the night to make restitution before he slept. On another occasion, after weighing and delivering a pound of tea, he found a small weight on the scales. He immediately weighed out the quantity of tea of which he had innocently defrauded her, and went in search of her, his good conscience not permitting him any delay. An Indian, having received a coin with some tobacco that was given him, sought his benefactor in order that he might return the money thus given in mistake. A person, hearing of his desire, urged him to keep it, when the Indian, shaking his head, said, "Ah, me got good man and bad man here," pointing to his breast. "Good man say, 'Money not yours; you must return it'; bad man say, 'It is yours; it was given to you'; good man say, 'That not right; tobacco yours, money not yours'; bad man say, 'Never mind, nobody know it, go buy rum'; good man say, 'Oh no! no such thing.' So poor Indian know not what to do; me lie down to sleep, but no sleep; good man and bad man talk all night and trouble me. So now I bring money back; now me feel happy."

May I be equally scrupulous in my practice of Christian honesty! May I be so because I fear God, because I owe it to others, because I respect myself. It is only *morality* to do this. As a *Christian*, then, I ought to give "Gospel measure," rather than "keep back part of the price," and expose myself and Christianity to reproaches from the ungodly.

O Thou Just God, Who hast made the balances, help me to hold and use them as for Thee, as under Thine eye; and whether a customer see me use them or no, may I deal with him as dealing with Thee!

HIS words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart,
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

May 16th.

WHILE worldly philosophers are reasoning, disputing, and speculating as to what, who, or where God is, have I discovered the great secret in my own personal experience?—

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.—1 John iv. 7, 8, 12, 13.

CANST thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Job xi. 7.) Such is the question that was propounded to man thousands of years ago in his intellectual pursuits after God. The answer is still the same, "No." Lelande said he had swept the heavens with his telescope and found no God. The Invisible One is not found by telescope or microscope, especially when the minds that look through them are blinded by unbelief. Intellect may in a measure understand His works by searching, but not Himself. One may study the works of an author and make himself familiar with them, but know little or nothing of the author. A bishop and a dean once discussed the question whether God could be best known through the intellect or the affections. The bishop took the side of the intellect, the dean the affections. After some dispute, the bishop said to the dean, "If you are right, my whole life has been a failure."

God is not to be known by intellectual searching but *heart-loving*. "If any man love God, the same is known of him." Is it not love of your friend that gives you most knowledge of him? Husband and wife know more of each other by love than any other way. Children who love their parents know them as they could not by any other means. "God is love." Love Him because He first loved you, and you will know Him more than those who only intellectually study Him, as revealed either in His word or in His works.

It is in this light that I can see how a child or a clodhopper may know God, while a philosopher searching in the depths and heights, in the seen and in the unseen, cannot find Him, and so comes to the conclusion God is "incomprehensible," "unknowable," "impalpable." How feeble is human wisdom! How mighty is love from heaven!

WHEN mystery shrouds my darkened path,
I'll check my dread, my doubts reprove;
In this my soul sweet comfort hath:
That God is Love.

May 17th.

DO I, in all my words, tempers, and actions, avoid everything that would mar the peace and unity of the church of which I am a member?—

Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them.—Rom. xvi. 17.

Walk worthily of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—Eph. iv. 1-3.

“PEACE at any price” is the maxim of some. It is not mine. There is peace which no price of human calculation can purchase; that is, the peace of God in the heart through Jesus Christ. It is a Divine *gift*. There is peace which I would not have with thousands of gold accompanying it, that is, *peace with sin*.

But as regards peace in the church of which I am a member: if I am satisfied that it is a church of Christ, in which He is recognized, loved, and worshipped as its Head, with evidences that He is in the midst of it, diffusing His grace and Spirit through its agents, means, and ordinances; then, to keep peace, to consolidate it, and to extend it, is my bounden duty and privilege; but at *any* cost? No! not at the cost of my soul or my Saviour.

At what cost, then? At the cost of my sentiments, opinions, wishes, idiosyncrasies, yea, even at the cost of departure from the church. If my personal opinions on non-essential matters are bones of contention and strife, and I will not, or cannot, give them up, I had better leave the church and take all these with me, than persist in keeping my membership at the cost of peace. What am I or these belongings that I should prize them as of higher value than the peace of Christ's people? I can find a retreat somewhere else (in solitude, if necessary), in which I may rest and work out my salvation. On the other hand, if I can pay down the price at which peace may be preserved, it may be wiser and more Christian to do so. If needs be, I should be willing, as John teaches, to lay down my life for the brethren. (1 John iii. 16.)

O God of all peace, help me to show myself one of Thy children by being a peacemaker in Thy family!

HOW sweet, how heavenly is the sight, When those who love the Lord,
In one another's peace delight, And so fulfil His word!
When love, in one delightful stream, Through every bosom flows;
When union sweet, and kind esteem, In every action glows.

May 18th.

SEEING that time is short, and my connection with all the things of this life is so uncertain, what is my conduct with regard to them ?—

Brethren, the time is short : it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away. —1 Cor. vii. 28-31.

THINGS of earth are never at one stay. Everything is as a shadow, which appeareth for a time and then vanisheth away. As a river, they pass from us and we see them no more. Like the tides, they are always on the ebb and flow. Our best things come as with sparrows' wings and fly away as with eagles'. The morning is soon lost in night ; summer quickly followed by winter. We have life to-day ; it is gone to-morrow. We have the enjoyment of friendship, of marriage, of eating and drinking now, but affliction and a multitude of other events come and put an end to all. The whole of this state of earthly things is like a drama on the stage : it seems, as we gaze on it, *real*, but it actually passes away while we look at it, and it is over and done with ere we know it.

What then ? Why, let us eat and drink, buy and sell, weep and rejoice, work and rest, sleep and awake, use all our family relations and pleasures, remembering that, while as actors each one is taking his own part in the drama of life, we are all passing away together. Some will have done their part before others, and will disappear : but ere long everyone now in the play will have finished his part, and the curtain will drop.

But while I act my part as regards things that are transitory, let me not forget that I have to do with things which are *abiding* —the things of God's kingdom of righteousness and truth. These are more than they *seem*. They are immutable, nor can they ever be "shaken." They are glorious as God Himself, and as enduring.

To these let me give prayerful thought and unwavering adherence ! They are my life and salvation, my happiness and strength. They will abide with me through the interminable future. As the shadowy things of the stage are followed by the realities of life to the actors, so the fashions of this world, which are passing away, by the fixed and unchanging realities of eternity.

AS a shadow life is fleeting ; As a vapour so it flies ;
For the season now retreating, Pardon grant and make me wise—
Wise that I my days may number, Strive and wrestle with my sin ;
Stay not in my work nor slumber, Till Thy glorious rest I win.

May 19th.

AM I as a Christian unstable and easily moved?—

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.—Eph. iv. 14.

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established in grace.—Heb. xiii. 9.

I HAVE seen a child so pleased with a toy given by its father that it has danced for joy : but in a few days the child has thrown it aside and desired another. I have seen a vane on a church turn about by every change of the wind. I have seen an empiric perform the most wonderful feats to the amazement of his spectators. So have I known Christians pleased for a time with this or that doctrine, and soon after discard it for some new-fangled notion that has been foisted upon them. So have I known, so-called teachers of religion, impose upon their hearers the most absurd notions as the veritable truths of God.

As regards my being a Christian, I dread to think of being carried about with every wind of doctrine, divers and strange, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. How much more satisfactory it is to be established in grace than to be tossed about by the whimsicalities of men ; to be strong in the fixed principles of truth than to be imbecile in the ever-changing opinions of the times ; to know your belief and abide by it than to have it moulded by any religious charlatan that may appear in your way ! It is a good thing that the heart be *established* in grace. The *heart* fixed, the head will not go far wrong.

In following Christ, I would have a similar spirit of resolution to that which actuated Ruth in following Naomi :—"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following thee : for whither thou goest I will go ; and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God ; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried" (Ruth i. 16, 17). What sublimity it gives to Christian character to be thus resolute and fixed in adhering to Him, Who is the Beauty of Holiness and the Perfection of the universe !

FILL with inviolable peace,
Stablish and keep my settled heart ;
In Thee may all my wanderings cease ;
From Thee no more may I depart ;
Thy utmost goodness called to prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.

May 20th.

DO I seek the aid of the Holy Spirit in prayer?—

For through Him (Jesus) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—Eph. ii. 18.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.—Rom. viii. 26.

WHEN prayer is only the exercise of our natural faculties of mind and body, or of our acquired powers of education or habit, however *easy* it may be, it is cold and unprofitable. It goes no farther in its results than the exercise. When that is over, all is over.

“Understanding” in prayer as to what we are praying for, or as to Whom we are praying, is not sufficient to make it effectual with God. There must be *spirit* in it, or it is dead prayer : our own spirit of life and earnestness. Hence Paul says, “I will pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also.” But *our* spirit by itself is narrow in its vision, feeble in its exercise, and easily discouraged in its importunity, as it appears in prayer before the Infinitely Holy God. In order, therefore, to make our prayers available with Him to bring us suitable returns, we need another Spirit to join with ours and to help their infirmities. That is, we need the Spirit of God, Who can strengthen us with “might in the inner man” ; Who can teach us how to pray and what to pray for ; Who can make intercession within us according to the will of God ; Who can give confidence and even “boldness” at the throne of grace ; Who can, so to say, be in our spirit its prevailing power with God, so that it will not be us, but this Spirit speaking in us, that God will hear on our behalf.

Such a Spirit is the Holy Spirit, freely and willingly given to all who ask. This is that Spirit I need to give me access to the Father through Jesus Christ ; then, to guide me in all my conduct of prayer in His presence. With this Spirit praying in my spirit, I shall always find it good to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus.

Prayer of this kind is not simply pleasant but *glorious* ; it ascends higher than duty, it is holy *privilege* ; it not only is a blessing in itself, but brings down all needful blessings.

O blessed Spirit, evermore be in me such a Spirit of prayer !

HIS breath inspires all prayer that doth rejoice
To rise like incense to the central sun ;
All praise is the intoning of His voice,
Swelling from whispers in the heart begun.

May 21st.

AM I a true man? That is, Do I hold no principle on which I am not prepared any hour to act, and in any hour to risk the consequences of holding it?—

We are true men, thy servants are not spies.—Gen. xlii. 11.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.—John xviii. 37.

THERE was a time in the history of Israel when a *true man* could not be found to lead God's hosts against His enemies, so Deborah became their leader. At another time God commanded Jeremiah to run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, to see if he could find a man that executed judgment, that sought the truth, and if he found such a *true man*, God said He would pardon Jerusalem its iniquity.

"The truest man," says Seneca, "is he who chooses right with the most invincible resolution; who resists the sorest temptation from within and without; who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully; who is calmest in storms, and most fearless under menaces and frowns; whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God, is most unfaltering."

I would be all this, and something more. I would be "*a man in Christ*," and have Christ in me. I would be so in Him and He in me that we two shall be as one. Then, indeed, shall I be a *true man*, even as He was:—true as light, as love, as purity, as God, as truth itself; yea, more true than man in Eden before sin had made him false. Then should I witness to the truth, in relying on it, in speaking it, in testifying to it, in being a living embodiment of it. Nothing would turn me from it in the speculations, theories, changes, and controversies of men, any more than the sun is changed in his course by any of the mutations which occur in the clouds and temperature of the earth's atmosphere. "Live as on a mountain," says one. "Let men see, let them know a real man who lives as he was meant to live. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him, for that is better than to live as men do."

What under heaven is nobler, diviner, than a *true man*?

Thou true God in Christ, make *me* such a man for Thy glory's sake.

BE noble! and the Nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,—
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own!
Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
And thou wilt never more be sad and lone!

May 22nd.

DO *I know in my experience what it is to be dead to sin and alive unto God?—*

Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. vi. 11.

If we be dead (to sin) with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him (in newness of life).—Rom. vi. 8.

D “DEAD!” Not blind, or deaf, or dumb, or paralysed. “Dead!” Not in a state of coma, or in a trance, which sometimes has been mistaken for death. Dead indeed *unto sin*. Blessed death! A heathen said, “I would rather be a madman than sensual.” But the Christian would rather be dead; and so he is. Life in sin is as absolutely gone from him, as is life from a body which has been dead a century. The life of sin in its pleasures, gains, fascinations of sights, sounds, sensations, pursuits, may be all around me; but I am dead to them. They have no attraction for me, nor influence over me. They excite in me no desire, no passion, no sentiment, no emotion. They are to me as all things in the material, commercial, and literary world to one being carried to his grave.

And yet I *live*. A new life has taken the place of the old, in the same faculties. No longer alive to sin, I am alive to God in Christ. I now live *with* Christ in “heavenly places,” in a “new heaven and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” I am still a man with men, as Christ was when on earth, but I am not a *sinning* man with sinning men as He was not. Having received this new life from God through the mediation of Christ by the Spirit, this same Spirit leads me through the same Jesus Christ to return the love, the obedience, the works of the new life to Him from Whom it came. I live unto God!

“To be alive with Christ,” says J. H. Newman, “is to be so minded that the atmosphere of heaven refreshes, enlivens, stimulates, invigorates us. To be alive, is not merely to bear the thought, to assent to the truths of religion, to be religious; but to be drawn towards it, to love it, to delight in it, to obey it.”

O how transcendently blessed is the man “dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God.” Would that I were thus dead! Thou Great sin-Destroyer, lay to Thy mighty hand and kill sin in me. Then breathe in me the life of Thyself.

LORD, Thou art in my nature, more mine than is my sin,
Fulfil me with Thy Presence, and make all new within;
Let body, soul, and spirit be so indwelt by Thee,
That of Thy life within me they may the organs be.

May 23rd.

DO I feel the uplifting and sanctifying power of Jesus in my daily life?—

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—Ep. i. 3.

Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—Ep. ii. 6.

In Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—1 Peter i. 8.

AN aged American minister once had submitted to him the following question:—“*Why do you personally believe Christianity to be a divine revelation?*” His answer was:—

1. “A personal experience of fifty years gives me an absolute knowledge of the saving uplifting power of Jesus. His word has a power to rebuke, to cleanse, to comfort, to uphold, to enlighten me, incomparably greater than that of any other word which has ever reached me. The nearer I keep to Him, and the more unreservedly I trust Him, so much the more tenderly do I feel the love of God redeeming, guiding, and sanctifying me. In contact with Jesus I feel that there is in Him a fulness of divine redeeming energy, the effects of which on me are limited only by my own unfaithfulness or by my want of capacity to receive it.”

2. “In the intimacy and friendships of these same fifty years, I have found that the purest, sweetest, and noblest of my friends were those that kept nearest to Jesus. I could name, I think, over twenty persons who at first made a deep impression on me through the peculiar blending of purity, sweetness, and strength in them; and whom I afterwards discovered to be in the habit of frequent and devout study of the mind and temper of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels.”

Life in nature is continually lifting up its subjects above the earth; so the life of Jesus in the soul lifts it above the coldness and sordidness of this world towards its Source and Centre. Its uplifting power is more sweetly felt and blessedly enjoyed as the end comes near.

O that I may so meditate on Jesus as revealed in His word, and so receive Him by faith in my heart as to feel Him lifting me above my selfishness, worldliness, and unbelief; lifting me nearer and nearer to His great Heart of Love, where, like John, I shall lean, and find peace in the bosom of my “Beloved.”

I FEEL Him lifting up my head, He brings salvation near,
His presence makes me free indeed, And He will soon appear.
The bliss of those that fully dwell, Fully in Thee believe,
'Tis more than angel-tongues can tell, Or angel-minds conceive.

May 24th.

AM I valiant for the TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS?—

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.—
Jude 3.

Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of
the Gospel.—Phil. i. 27.

The truth as it is in Jesus.—Ep. iv. 21.

THERE never was a time in which so many searched after what may be called *intellectual* truth, as at present; and in which there were so many facilities for making known the results of their researches. These researches, too, are made known in such ways of interest, if not entertainment, as to engage the mind of the age in its study of them, almost beyond moderation, if not reason.

But the results, after all, are far from satisfactory, inasmuch as there are still researches in the same directions, and one discovery often nullifies another; so that many readers and students of these have ever and anon to be asking themselves, "Where are we?" "What next?" often showing the results to be the outcome of the mind and not of the subjects.

I consider all truth, settled and established as such, valuable. But there is truth and truth. Whatever *is*, is truth. So that truth is as comprehensive as all things, and as diversified as each thing. All truth is not equally important in itself or in its use. Some concerns the interests of man as pertaining only to earth, some as bearing on his immortal wellbeing.

Whoever searches after truth is engaged in a good work. He who searches after the highest and most useful is best engaged.

"*The truth as it is in Jesus*" is revealed and ready to hand. It is the simplest, clearest, the most elevating, sanctifying, and enduring. It brings the largest and most numerous blessings on individuals and the race, and throws its beneficent influences on all other forms of truth. I choose this in preference to all others; I believe it, and propagate it before all others; at the same time neither ignoring nor despising any other.

Jesus, the Truth, may I eternally live in Thee!

O BLESSED Truth, thou to the sight
Revealest excellence divine;
Of joy the source, of peace the course,
Dost thou to show serenely shine;
O heavenly Truth! O freedom fair!
Blessings for earth ye freely bear,—
May all they bring, O earth, be thine.

May 25th.

AM I afraid of death, or am I already its victor through Jesus Christ?—

Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, Which giveth us the victory, THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.—1 Cor. xv. 54-57.

WHAT makes death a terror is *sin*, and sin makes death a terror because of its guilt and apprehended consequences after death. To a man doomed to die on the gallows, conscious of his desert, the prospect of dying is a fearful thing; but to one who is consciously innocent, as were the martyrs, death is nothing more than passing through a vestibule into a king's palace.

"The sting of death is sin." But Jesus by dying destroyed that sting; and he who believes on Him finds when he comes to face death that, however terrible it may be in form, it has no power to do him any harm. "Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." In dying, Dr. Owen said, "I am going to Him Whom my soul has loved, or rather Who has loved me with an everlasting love, which is the whole ground of my consolation." "I have got the victory," shouted Samuel Rutherford on his dying bed, "and Christ my Saviour is holding out both His hands to embrace me."

As I now believe in Jesus and love Him, I have in Him already conquered death. Death has now no dominion over me, nor will he have when I come to struggle with him in the final hour, any more than birth over a babe when it is introduced into life. Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again. And whosoever liveth and believeth on Me, shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). With this assurance from my Lord, I may say, as Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Dying is going home to the Christian; and shall I shrink from going home?

Blessed Jesus, I thank Thee for Thy conquest of death on my behalf!

WHAT is death
To him that meets it with an upright heart?
A quiet haven, where his shattered bark
Harbours secure till the rough storm is past.
Perhaps a passage, overhung with clouds
But at its entrance: a few leagues beyond
Opening to kinder skies and milder suns
And seas pacific as the souls that seek them.

May 26th.

DO I feel that one glory of the Gospel of Christ is not that it DESTROYS the law, but that it makes it cease to be a BONDAGE; not that it gives freedom FROM it, but IN it?—

We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.—Gal. iv. 3-6.

Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.—Gal. v. 1.

THE English law to a *loyal* subject is no bondage. He moves about in the country feeling as free as a bird in the air. His spirit within him is in harmony with the law, and so he feels no bondage, but the greatest freedom.

Not so with a *rebel*. The law is irksome and galling to him; he kicks against it, because his spirit is in bondage to that which is opposed to the law.

Thus it was with me at one time as regards the law of God. My nature was wrong, and it thought the law of God wrong. So I rebelled against it, and the more I rebelled the more I felt its burden and bondage; the more firmly it held me, and was to me a greater terror.

But when Jesus appeared and I received Him as my Deliverer, He did not destroy the law nor my obligation to obey it, but He emancipated me from my antagonism to the law. He took away the spirit of bondage and fear. He gave me a new nature and spirit, which made me free from the law of sin and death. So that now I live a new life of obedience in His kingdom, feeling no terror of law or even obligation to it. My obedience is not from force of law, but from love of Him. "The law is not made for a righteous man." Were there no law in His kingdom I should be obedient to Him from the very nature and spirit He has put within me.

May I stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free, and be not entangled in the yoke of bondage to any man, system, profession, or church.

Blessed be Thy name, O Christ, for the liberty I have in Thee: not freedom *from* the law, but liberty *in* it.

THE tearful eye at first may read the line—
"Bondage to grief!" but He shall wipe away
The tears, and clear the vision till it read
In ever-brightening letters—"Free to serve!"
For whom the Son makes free, is free indeed!

May 27th.

AS self-denial is plainly taught in the Scriptures, do I observe it to the extent enjoined by my Lord and Master?—

If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.—Matt. v. 29, 30.

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.—Matt. xvi. 24.

NOTHING, perhaps, is so difficult a task to enter upon and practice, as denial of self. Self is so near and dear to us. The centre of its being is the heart. There it has its throne and seat of authority. Thence it issues its mandates for the government of the life in all its faculties and activities. Naturally we love self; we think of it as our best friend. We feed it, we nourish it, and live for it. For anyone to *touch* that is to touch the apple of his eye.

There are certain things which self has no particular liking for. These it will readily enough surrender, as the spoilt child will the things it does not like. The bitter, the cruel, the worthless, the painful, any one may have, but the sweet, the valuable, the beautiful, must be for *self*. "Consider me first in everything; let the *best* of everything be mine. Never mind anyone else, let me have all I want. Give the penny to God, but keep the pound for me. Give rags to clothe the poor, but clothe me in silks and satins. Go to church when it is fine, but stay at home when it is wet, to save me from inconvenience. Give up the communion of saints, the visitation of the sick, the study of the Scriptures, secret or family prayer; but not the concert, the theatre, the novel. These I like." Such is the spirit of self.

"No," says Jesus, "that is not it. These very things that you *like* to pamper self with are the very things you are to deny yourself of."

But denial of self alone does not make a Christian. I must take up my cross, whatever that be, and follow Jesus. Jesus must be to me in the place of Self. It is then no longer self that I study to please, or that is near and dear to me, but Christ. He must have the best of everything. He must have the throne of my heart, and the government of my life.

TAKE up thy cross and follow Christ,
Nor think till death to lay it down;
For only he who bears his cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

May 28th.

DO I see in the kingdom of grace within me revivings of life, beauty, and promise of fruitfulness, corresponding to what I see in the kingdom of Nature around?—

The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills. My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Lam. ii. 8-13.

THE king in the heavens rides forth in his majesty and strength. He sheds down his benign and genial influences, and everything in Nature over which he reigns, gives him a generous and royal reception. The birds sing to welcome him, the flowers smile at his genial presence, the buds and blossoms of trees open to receive him, the lambs skip on the hills at his coming, the meadows spread their verdure for his footsteps, in a word, there is universal concert of gladness at his approach.

Sun of Righteousness, arise with healing in Thy wings, and shine upon the winter of my soul. Scatter such influences of Thine as shall increase my light and warmth; as shall cause long-dormant seeds of goodness in my nature to spring forth; as shall bring out the blossoms of promises into a coming harvest, to be gathered in eternity; as shall call forth all my latent powers into activity, vigour, and usefulness; as shall create in all my faculties a melody and harmony of joy and thanksgiving to Thee. Let my soul be as a well-watered garden which the Lord has blest. Let me hear the voice of my Beloved saying to me as He walks forth in His beautiful garments of heavenly light and Bridegroom loveliness, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

O, my Beloved! I hear Thy sweet voice. I welcome Thy loving call. In response, I do arise and follow Thee in newness of life and increased devotion to Thy service. Thou art the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. In Thee I would realize fulness of love, ecstasy of bliss, and everlasting consummation of love and peace!

THE merry May hath pleasant hours, and dreamily they glide,
As if they floated, like the leaves, upon a silvery tide;
The trees are full of crimson buds, the woods are full of birds,
And the waters flow to music like a tune with pleasant words.

May 29th.

WHY do I love God?—

God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved).—Eph. ii. 4, 5.

God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. v. 8.

We love Him because He first loved us.—1 John iv. 19.

THE reason why so few love God is that they think of Him as a Being of great majesty and power: as the mighty Creator and Upholder of heaven and earth: as a Judge, sitting on a throne of administrative justice, “visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.”

God is all this, yet *God is love*. Love is His nature, His heart, His will. Being a Judge, a Creator, a Sovereign, does not destroy His love, which is supreme in all those relationships. He is my *Father*, loving me more than I love myself, yea, loving me when I did not love Him. As I think of the way in which He has shown His love to me, how can I, how dare I, not love Him in return?

A little girl was playing with her doll in a room where her mother was busily engaged in some literary work. When she had finished her writing, she said, “You can come now, Alice; I have done all I want to do this morning.” The child ran to her mother, exclaiming, “I am so glad, for I wanted to love you so much.” “But I thought you were very happy with dolly.” “Yes, mother, I was, but I soon get tired of loving her, for she cannot love me back.” “And is that why you love me—because I can love you back?” “That is one why, but not the first or best why.” “What is the first and best why?” “Because you loved me when I was too little to love you back.”

Yes, God loved me when I did not and could not love Him, and that is my reason for loving Him.

GOD IS LOVE. Let heaven, earth, and hell resound with the music: so that, if there is a spirit that loves Him not, he may know he is without excuse.

Divine Father—LOVE!—I would that my love to Thee were more intense and more perfect!

POOR, unworthy though we be,
Thou dost deign to will that we
Should be blest in loving Thee;
Not from dread of wrath or woe,
Not for all Thou wilt bestow,
For Thyself whose love we know,
Help us, Lord, to love Thee.

May 30th.

AM I influenced in my life and conduct by the wisdom which is from above, or that which is from beneath?—

If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.—Jas. iii. 14, 15, 18.

AS heaven is higher than the earth, so the wisdom which comes from above is higher in all excellent qualities than that which comes from beneath. Even the wisdom that comes from schools and books is not equal to this. This wisdom foresees the evil and flies from it. It considers what are man's highest interests and attends to them first. It is deep-sighted and far-sighted. It bartereth not heaven for earth. It loses not the soul, even in exchange for the whole world. It is the wisdom of God. Its worth is beyond rubies, and all the things we can desire are not to be compared to it. (See Prov. iii.)

The wisdom from beneath comes without asking. It is not worth the asking. The wisdom from above is of such intrinsic merit, of such heavenly excellence, of such rare worth, that it is only given in response to believing prayer. "If any man lack this wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." What a treasure, and all for asking! How few of the sons of men will do this. They will go to the ends of the earth for gold, but will not go to the throne of grace, which is near them, for what is infinitely more precious.

I will desire this wisdom; I will seek it; I will ask for it; I will use it as best I can to His glory who gives it, and for the world's good, which needs it.

Evermore, O Fountain of wisdom, pour Thy heavenly streams into my open heart.

THE wise man, says the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys far on the endless line of life;
Values his soul, thinks of eternity;
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil; lives on hope; on hope the fruit
Of faith; looks upward, purifies his soul,
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.

May 31st.

DO I comfort myself in the struggles of life with thoughts of heaven?—

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would told you. I go to prepare a place for you.—John xiv. 1-3.

H EAVEN is the "kingdom of God." It is the "City of God." It is the "house of God" where there are "many mansions." These words indicate its vastness. Who can find the boundaries of that kingdom of which God is the King? Who can measure the dimensions of that house, of which *God* is the Tenant? Surely there is room for every subject born into it, and for every alien that becomes an adopted child. Although heaven has been receiving inhabitants from every age and place of earth these six thousand years, there are mansions yet awaiting occupants; crowns yet awaiting victors; thrones yet vacant for those who overcome through the blood of the Lamb!

As the Great Father has provided such a vast home for His children, so He has adequately furnished it and made corresponding provision for the fulfilment of their most enlarged purified desires. If in this world He has provided such a fulness of good things for His people, both in nature and in grace, how much better things may we believe He has provided for them in the kingdom of heaven? Under the figures in Scripture, employed to set forth this provision, we may see, in a measure, what it will be—fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore—never failing supplies of the highest delights and sweetest gratifications for all the refined longings of glorified spirits—an inebriation of the deepest happiness—a perfection of light, love, fellowship—a communion in knowledge, wisdom, truth, with the Holy God and His holy angels—the possession of riches inestimable and incorruptible, honours, sublime and unfading, rights inalienable, and glory everlasting.

Blessed Father, I thank Thee for such a Home in prospect. Let me not think the road too rough, the mountains too steep, the sufferings too many, in going to it. May the light of the city, seen as yet so far off, and the thoughts of its ineffable delights, be to me an unfailing source of comfort and encouragement in all the troubles of life!

EARTH'S but a sorry tent,
Pitched for a few frail days,
A short-leased tenement;
Heaven's still my song, my praise.
O, happy place! When shall I be,
My God, with Thee, to see Thy face? /

Whit Sunday.

Holy Spirit, from above,
Gift of the Eternal Love
Through the glorified Lord,
In fulfilment of His word ;—

May the churches look to Thee,
More and more Thy glory see ;
May they of Thy *strength* take hold,
In it be divinely bold :
Take Thy *life* and active be,
In its health and purity,
Take the Truth which thou dost teach,
With it every conscience reach :
Take the *Fire* that Thou dost bring,
With it always pray and sing ;
With it preach the Gospel word,
Witness for their risen Lord,
Put the human more aside,
In Thy *presence* more confide ;
Take Thee, as descending dew,
Barren places to renew,
Put away symbolic show
And the signs that few men know ;
Take Thee as the *Peerless Light*,
Scattering all their worldly night ;
Take Thee as the *Holy Dove*,
Filling each and all with love :
Take Thee as the living *Power*,
As the Father's gracious Dower ;
Give Thee liberty to reign,
God supreme without refrain,
Penetrating everywhere,
Vitalizing all the air,
Making all things bright and good
As the paradise of God.

Then shall the churches' glory rise
As sun in cloudless eastern skies,
Go forth with all-subduing sway
And soon bring on millennial day.

Anon.

June 1st.

IF I have an enemy of any kind, am I making the best use I can of him?—

If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.—Matt. v. 44.

IT is possible for an enemy to be more *useful* than a friend. He may not be so appreciated and enjoyed; as the rod of correction the kiss of love.

A friend may be very kind, attentive, in many ways helpful and reliable; but he may be blind to my defects, or if he see them, may not correct them, or correct in a way that will not lead to much improvement. Whereas, an enemy is sure to observe only my failings and misdeeds. These he will rather magnify than diminish. He gives, therefore, the advantage of showing me what is wrong in my spirit or character, as a looking-glass shows what is out of order in my person or dress; and seeing it, I may at least have the opportunity, of putting it right. If he malign me, I can practise my patience in bearing it. If he provoke me, I can exercise the spirit of meekness. If he despitefully use me, it will give me the privilege of praying for him. If he speak evil of me, I can speak well of him, as far as I know, and improve my disposition to return good for evil. Charles Wesley used to say that Mrs. John Wesley was his best friend, because she nearly always abused him, and told him of his faults, as no one else did.

To love one that loves me may not be difficult, but what merit is there in that? If I give a shilling to one who gives a shilling to me, neither gains; but if I give a shilling to him that has, or would *rob* me of one, it is praiseworthy. If I can speak something good of him who speaks evil of me, it is certainly preferable to detracting from his character without making my own any the better.

It was said of Archbishop Cranmer, "If any one wanted a good deed from him, the best way was to do him an evil one."

This certainly is a wise use to make of an enemy.

O MAN, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive,—
Forgive him seventy times and seven!
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

June 2nd.

IF I weep now, shall I not rejoice by and bye?—

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.—Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.—John xvi. 20.

Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.—Ps. xxx. 5.

WHAT pain is to the body, sorrow is to the mind. Both alike are unwelcome guests. It would perhaps be difficult to say, which is worse to bear, and which has more melancholy results.

The more sensitive the mind, the more susceptible of sorrow. He that is easily elated is easily cast down. "Sorrow comes on horseback, but goes away on foot." Who does not know sorrow from some one or more of its causes as they arise in life? An unkind word, an uncharitable deed, a treacherous friend, the loss of a loved one, a child's lapse from virtue, a disappointed hope, remembrance of sins past, the state of the ungodly world, are sources of sorrow to a Christian mind.

The Psalmist said he "found trouble and sorrow." Surely he did not *seek* them, but he *met* them as he walked the ways of life. Again he said, the "sorrows of death (dark, terrible, threatening) compassed me," as though they would crush him. The Divine Man was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His soul on one occasion was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; under that sorrow He "sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling to the ground." "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow."

Sorrow sometimes is like a leaden cloud hanging over the sun for days in winter; sometimes as a cloud in spring. To one man it may be as Egyptian darkness; to another only as an ordinary night, followed by a joyous morning. This is like a child crying itself to sleep in an evening's grief, and waking with the sun to sing and play. "I will make them rejoice from their sorrow" (Jer. xxxi. 13).

Let me not forget in the night of my sorrow that I shall have an *eternal* day in which to be joyful. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away," never more to return.

SELF-LOVE no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
'Tis all the bliss she knows:
But nobler aims true love employ;
In self-denial is her joy,
In suffering her repose!

June 3rd.

AS I am the Lord's property, do I trust Him to take care of me?—

What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Behold, all souls are mine.—Ez. xviii. 4.

For the Lord's portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.—Deut. xxxii. 9.

IF I am the Lord's, then there is an obligation on Him as my Proprietor to take care of me, and an obligation on me to surrender myself to Him for that purpose. A child who is conscious of having a kind and loving father feels assured that he will provide for his wants and guard him in danger; the child, also, feels that he must trust his father for these things.

If an earthly father, "being evil," may thus be trusted, how much more may I trust my Father in heaven, Who is infinitely and unchangeably loving and good? If He clothes the grass, and feeds the ravens, and takes care of sparrows, I am sure He will see after me. I will trust Him, and no one else.

The following incident, recorded by an American writer, beautifully illustrates this:—A lady, whom I met when travelling through the South, told me a story of the slave times there. She said she had occasion at one time to give one of her slaves a piece of work to do, which required him to stand outside the window on a plank that was held steady by someone inside sitting upon the other end. The man was a little afraid, but said, "Well, missus, I'll go if you sit right dar all the time, you' own self." The man's wife was present, and the mistress said, "Won't it do if Mandy sits there? She won't let you fall." "No, missus," he replied, "I doant trust Mandy; she's only my wife, and she'll just done forgot, and git up. But you's my missus, and I 'longs to you, and in course you'se gwine to keep me safe."

That is it. I will trust no one with my salvation from sin and hell except Him Whose I am and Whom I serve. He has bought me; He knows my worth. If He suffer me to perish He will be the loser, for I am His and not my own. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

"O Lord of hosts! BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN THEE."

THEREFORE, if Thou canst fail,
Then can Thy truth and I! But while rocks stand
And rivers stir, Thou canst not shrink or quail;
Yea, when rocks and all things shall disband
Then shalt Thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruin praise Thy power.

June 4th.

DOES my religion make me joyful and happy in the Lord?—

Rejoicing in hope. Rejoicing with them that do rejoice.—Rom. xii. 12, 15.

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.—Phi. iv. 4.

God fill you with all joy in believing.—Rom. xv. 13.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, myself shall be joyful in my God.—Isa. lxi. 10.

Ye children of Zion, rejoice in the Lord.—Joel ii. 23.

NO one is more mistaken than he who supposes that the Christian religion makes a man melancholy, or morose, or fanatical.

If religion has such an effect on me, I am sure it is not *Christ's* religion. It may be one of my own, or a religion of the world that does this, but not Christ's. Can anything be expected from a religion of human nature or of the world better than melancholy, or even madness itself?

Christ's religion is brightness, happiness, joyfulness, peacefulness, satisfaction. "Your joy shall be FULL," says our Lord to His followers. "Your joy no one taketh from you." "Rejoice and be exceeding glad." "Peace I give unto you." "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY," "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "Let not your heart be troubled." "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength." Such are a few of the sentiments which show the nature of Christ's religion, as enjoyed by those who possess it. Can anything be farther from melancholy?

If anyone professing Christ's religion shows a contrary spirit, it is from other causes; as when the sun does not shine on the earth, it is because of night, or of a cloud, which is not of the sun but of the earth; or as when a beautiful instrument gives out discordant sounds, it is out of tune; or as when a naturally good-tempered man is ill-tempered, something unusual has occurred to provoke him. It is the nature of Christ's religion to be all happiness because it is all holiness: and if otherwise, an ingredient has been added which is foreign to it, as when gall, put into honey, mars its sweetness.

Thou ever-blessed God! Grant me to walk in the light of Thy countenance; in Thy Name to rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness to be exalted!

ON our way rejoicing, gladly let us go:
Conquered hath our Leader, vanquished is our foe!
Christ without, our safety; Christ within, our joy!
Who, if we be faithful, can our joy destroy?

June 5th.

DO I always come to God in the only way in which He can be approached on earth or in heaven?—

Jesus said unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.—John xiv. 6.

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—Eph. ii. 18.

I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.—John x. 9.

IT is said to have been a sacred law among the Molossians that whoever came before the king with his infant son in his arms should have pardon for every offence of which he was guilty.

It is a law in the kingdom of God that whatsoever we ask of the Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, we shall receive (John xvi. 23). For through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Eph. ii. 18.)

It is not uncommon to see on certain occasions of great meetings the words in large letters, "This way to the meeting"; and persons also stationed to see that none go in any other way. That was the way appointed by those who had the right to make it, and if any chose not to enter that way, the alternative remained, they could keep out; or, if any did enter another way, they were intruders and liable to be expelled.

Thus it is as to entrance into God's presence, for prayer or any other purpose. The way of approach is fixed and established by authority that no one need question: "NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." He that enters by any other door is a "thief and a robber," and, like the man without the "wedding garment," will be cast out.

This is the new and living way into the Holiest, and there is no other. "This way to pardon, to peace, to heaven." So says the Father; so says the Son; so says the Holy Ghost; so say the angels; so say all who have entered into grace on earth or glory in heaven.

O Jesus! how many even in this Christian land are seeking to come to God and to enter heaven in ways of their own making proudly ignoring the ONLY WAY established by the Sovereign of the universe! When this entrance is closed, and they come knocking for admission, and the voice from within says, "Too late, ye cannot enter now," my God! whither will they go?

O BY that Name in which all fulness dwells,
O by that Love which every love excels,
O by that Blood so freely shed for sin,
Open blest Mercy's gate and take me in

June 6th.

AM I a servant to Christ, or is Christ a servant to me?—

He took upon Himself the form of a servant.—Phi. ii. 7.

I am among you as He that serveth.—Luke xxii. 27.

The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.—Matt. xx. 28.

IT is indeed a singular fact that things in religion are in the reverse order to what things are in the world. It is the servant that serves the master, and not the master the servant. To be a servant is considered menial; to be a master, honourable. This is the order of human thinking. In the kingdom of Christ, in nature and in grace, the order is that the great serve. While in one sense a Christian may call himself a servant of Christ, it is in a higher sense true that Christ is a servant of the Christian. Does the earth serve the sun more than the sun the earth; the plants and flowers serve the air and light, more than they the flowers and plants; the child the father more than the father the child?

An old woman in Glencroe, visited by the minister, was found seated in bed, which, contrary to usual experience in the district, was scrupulously clean.

"You are an old servant of Christ. I understand," said he.

"Servant of Christ!" she responded, "Na, na; I'm naething pit a puir sinner. It's nine-and-forty years syne He pegan tae serve me."

"Serve you; how?"

"Dae ye no ken that?" she replied. "In the hoose o' Christ the Maister serves a' the guests. Did He no' Himsel' say, 'I'm amang ye as ane that serveth'? When He brocht me hame tae himsel' He then pegan tae serve me, an' He ha' served me ere syne. Nane ere compleened o' Christ pein' a pad servant!"

"Well, but I hope you are a servant for all that. In the state of glory His servants serve Him; and what is perfected there must begin here."

"That's a' fery true. I ken that I'm under His authority, pit somehoo I dinna like tae think much aboot servin' Christ. It gi'es me nae comfort."

I will never think of mentioning what I do for Christ in view of what He has done for me, and is doing for me every moment in ten thousand ways. He, the Incarnation of Infinite Love, is my Servant! All the service I can render Him is to receive His love, and give it back to Him in loyal obedience.

SERVANT of all, to toil for man, Thou didst not, Lord, refuse;
Thy majesty did not disdain To be employed for us!

June 7th.

DO I not know that though my faith is small, yet if it is sincere and exercised in God, it will, or rather, God will through it, do great things?—

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.—Matt. xvii. 20.

How much more shall He clothe you, O ye of little faith.—Matt. vi. 30.

WHEN I feel disheartened by my little faith, do I forget to what great uses God has applied little things in the building of the universe? and the essential place of little things in everything that is mighty and great in the world of manufacture and science? A little link or pin can hold massive principals together; a little hand can grasp a mighty rope; a little child can stand on a lofty mountain. If my faith rests on God, takes hold of God, and loves God, I need not trouble about its being little. It connects me with the Almighty, and the greatest faith can do no more. It is God makes me strong, not my faith. God looks after the little as well as the great. The eye is a small member of the body, but when open and used what wonders, in number, in variety, in distance, it can see in the universe. So my faith, though small, can see such wonders in the kingdom of God, as reason in its mightiest efforts cannot discern.

A Christian once complained of the weakness of his faith, and seemed distressed about it. The friend to whom he complained pointed him to a vine which had entwined itself around a pole, and was hanging loaded with beautiful clusters, and said, "Frail is that plant; but what harm is done to it by its frailty? As little will it prejudice your faith that it is weak, provided only it be sincere and unfeigned. Take the Cross of the Saviour and the Word of God; twine around these with all the faith that you have, and you will be kept from falling. A heart sensible of its weakness, and prostrating itself continually at the feet of the Divine mercy, is more acceptable than that which presumes upon the strength of its faith, and falls into self-security."

I will, then, no longer complain of my little faith, but be thankful for it. I will make the best use I can of it, hoping that, by exercise, it will strengthen and increase: as that of the woman of Canaan as she came to Christ on behalf of her daughter.

MY Saviour, Thou hast bid me come, O bid me come again,
And till I reach my heavenly home my sinking soul sustain;
While walking as at Thy command o'er this life's troubled sea,
O save by Thine outstretched hand until I am with Thee.

June 8th.

IN my reading and hearing the words of men concerning Christ and His religion, am I careful to judge everything by the pure word of God?—

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.—2 John 7.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.—Acts xx. 30.

There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.—2 Peter ii. 1.

HOW confusing and confounding are the opinions of men respecting Christ! While I may hear or read these, I will not be guided by them as to my views of Him. I will judge Him by Himself, or by what His Spirit says of Him in His word. I shall certainly be on the safe side if I do that. I will go further: I will speak of Him as I find Him *in me, with me,* and what He has done *for me.* I will try the spirits that speak to me of Him by His Spirit; and the words they speak by His words. If one speak to me either in book or preaching of the Christ, and show not the “print of the nails,” I shall know at once he is not the “Christ of God,” not my Christ either: for *my* Lord was crucified, and though in heaven, still bears the tokens of His love.

“I remember,” says Dr. Howson, “a story which runs thus: To a saint who was praying, the evil spirit showed himself radiant with royal robes, and crowned with a jewelled diadem, and said, ‘I am Christ—I am descending on the earth—and I desire first to manifest myself to thee.’ The saint kept silence, and looked on the apparition; and then said, ‘I will not believe that Christ is come to me save in that state and form in which he suffered: he must wear the marks of the wounds and the cross.’ The false apparition vanished. The application is this: Christ comes not in pride of intellect or reputation for ability. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying himself. Many false spirits are abroad, more are issuing from the pit: the credentials which they display are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, with the saint, look hard at them in silence, and ask them for the print of the nails.”

Gracious Redeemer, may I always see Thee in the light of Thy glorified wounds!

APPEAR as when of old confest the suffering Son of God;
And let me see Thee in Thy rest, but newly dipped in blood.
The hardness from my heart remove, Thou who for all hast died;
Show me the tokens of Thy love, Thy feet, Thy hands, Thy side.

June 9th.

DO I daily pray for my minister who is over me in the Lord?—

Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. . . . And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.—2 Thes. iii. 1, 2.

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel.—Eph. vi. 19.

MINISTERS are our “overseers in the Lord,” as shepherds, as watchmen, as teachers; and for their work they must give account to Him. Their work is most sacred, onerous, and constant. If true and faithful, they will meet with many difficulties, and perhaps adversaries. Unreasonable things will be said of them and done to them by “unreasonable and wicked men.” Well may true ministers of the Lord Jesus, as they contemplate their work, inquire with burdened souls, “Who is sufficient for these things?” They have need of our prayers and sympathy. If *Apostles* asked for the prayers of Christians, how much more ministers of Christ in these last days? They ask our prayers not for selfish ends, but that the “word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified”: that utterance may be given unto them, that they may in all fidelity declare the whole counsel of God, and in nothing they do for their Lord “be ashamed.”

I once knew a brother who was much addicted to finding fault with his minister. He either did not preach simple enough or eloquent enough, or he was too long or too short; he did not expound the word or he did not apply it; he was too worldly or too proud; he did not visit as he ought or he visited only the rich; he did not look sufficiently after the young or he neglected the old; he did not preach Christ as he should or he was too critical; he did not preach to save souls but only bodies.

I said to him one day, “My brother, do you ever *pray* for your minister?” He could not say that he did. “Very well, then, be not surprised if he fails to please or to profit *you*.”

It is astonishing how praying for the minister enkindles love to him; how it prepares us to hear him; how it gives charity as regards any of his shortcomings; how it makes his preaching edifying and profitable. It brings a blessing to us as well as a blessing to him.

O Lord, grant me Thy Spirit to help me to pray for him whom Thou hast placed over me in Thee!

FATHER of mercies, bow Thine ear, Attentive to our earnest prayer;
We plead for those who plead for Thee; Successful pleaders may they be!
Teach them to sow the gracious seed; Teach them Thy chosen flock to feed;
Teach them immortal souls to gain; Nor let them labour, Lord, in vain!

June 10th.

AS the will of God is my perfection, and as Jesus enjoins me to be perfect even as my Father which is in heaven is perfect, am I aiming at this and going on towards it?—

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.—Heb. vi. 1.

He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints.—Eph. iv. 11.

Teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.—Col. i. 28.

THERE can be nothing on earth or in heaven more laudable than to aim and to seek after the imitation of God in His *perfection of love*. There is no other imitation of Him which we can attain in such measure as this. We cannot be perfect as He is in power, in knowledge, in works, in wisdom; but we may be perfect as He is in *love*. God is love, and *we* may be love, so that like Him we shall love truth, purity, justice, and peace. We shall love our enemies, love all, love now and love evermore. To reign in love is to sit on the highest throne and to govern the largest kingdom. To be perfect in love, as our Father which is in heaven, is the consummation of bliss and the noblest end of human existence.

To bring me into this conformity to the Divine likeness everything within the system of nature and grace operates. Every impulse of the Holy Spirit is in this direction. Every word of God in doctrine, precept, and promise, looks to this end. All my communion with the saints, and my use of means and ordinances, are meant to contribute to the realisation of this. Every duty that God commands, every warning of sin, every admonition and counsel of friends, all remorse of conscience, every affliction of body, every reverse of fortune, every conflict with evil—all are designed to further my growth into assimilation to God in the perfection of love.

Such an array of means and influences shows the importance of the work to be accomplished and the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment. As Creator, God made man perfect; by what means, and how long the process, we know not. As Redeemer, His restoration of man is perfect; by what means we know, but how long the process we know not.

O God, make me perfect in Thy love: if not as quickly as sunlight takes the picture, yet as exactly and truly.

GIVE me faith to see more clearly what Thou art, what love is Thine; Earnestness to press more nearly to enjoy Thy love divine; Keep me patient, keep me lowly, ever learning more of Thee; Make me day by day more holy, till Thine unveiled face I see.

June 11th.

DO I blessedly enjoy the freedom which Jesus Christ gives to all His true followers?—

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—John viii. 32, 36.

Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.—Gal. v. 1.

TO have my body free from the slavish control of man, or free from the manacles and stone walls of a prison, or free from the power of affliction and pain, is a blessing of no mean nature. To be free in mind from the trammels of doubt and error as regards the momentous questions of truth, is even a greater blessing. To be free in soul from the guilt and condemnation of sin, from the dominion of lust, from worldly mindedness, from the dread of God, from the apprehension of coming judgment, is the most blessed of all.

This freedom has made slaves happy in their chains; prisoners joyful in their cells, and those in bondage to doubts, patient “until the day break and the shadows pass away,” when all things shall be seen and known in the peerless light of heaven.

Freedom of body the law may effect; freedom of mind personal intellectual research; but freedom of *soul*, only Jesus, King of grace and truth, can give. He proclaims liberty to the captive; He opens the prison doors to them that are bound; He says to the burdened penitent, “Go in peace, and sin no more.” His blood cleanses from all unrighteousness. His love casts out all fear that has torment.

Without *this* freedom, all other is of little worth comparatively. What does it avail that I am free as a citizen, if my greater self within is enslaved by ignorance, vice, selfishness, and deep-seated depravity? My worst tyrants are those which reign in my own soul, and drive me hither and thither as they list. If I lack force of principle and purpose, am I not a slave, however free the land in which I may live?

Blessed Jesus, break off every chain, and like a bird set free from its cage to fly in the air, may I enjoy my full liberty in Thee, the Author and End of my being!

ALL selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty—in vain,—
Of love—and feel it not!
He whose bosom glows with Thee—
He, and he alone, is free.

June 12th.

DO I seek the Lord with my whole heart?—

Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart.—Ps. cxix. 2.

With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments.—Ps. cxix. 10.

EARNESTNESS is one of the elements of successful prayer: and earnestness is of the heart, and of nothing else.

A young friend was once asked, "Did you pray before conversion?" She answered that she did after a sort. She was then asked, "What is the difference between your present prayers and those before you knew the Lord?" Her answer was, "Then I *said* my prayers, but now I *mean* them. Then I said the prayers which other people taught me, but now I find them in my heart."

On one occasion when Bunyan was endeavouring to pray, the tempter suggested "that neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, at all concerned him, nor could they help him by reason of his sin; therefore it was vain to pray." Yet he thought with himself, "I will pray." "But," said the tempter, "your sin is unpardonable." "Well," said he, "I will pray." "It is to no boot," said the adversary. And still he answered, "I will pray." And so he began his prayer, "Lord, Satan tells me that neither Thy mercy nor Christ's blood is sufficient to save my soul. Lord, shall I honour Thee most by believing Thou wilt and canst? or him by believing Thou neither wilt nor canst? Lord, I would fain honour Thee by believing that Thou canst and wilt." And while he was thus speaking, "as if someone had clapped him on the back," that scripture fastened on his mind, "O man, great is thy faith."

How many prayers have I offered to God—cold, heartless, unavailing! I have been too much possessed of the world to pray as I ought. My energy of soul has been so much expended in seeking temporal things, that I have had little or none left for seeking spiritual. Praying has often been a weariness by reason of the weariness of my body. How often I have prayed and forgotten all I have prayed for! I have *read* prayers in church and in my family, and *said* them in my closet, but O, how formal and useless! Gracious God, forgive the sins of my prayers!

PRAYERS ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity;
Who worships the great God, that instant joins
The first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell.

June 13th.

DO I desire and am I seeking conformity to the example which Jesus Christ has left me?—

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.—John xiii. 15.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.—Matt. xi. 29.

Leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps.—1 Peter ii. 21.

Be likeminded one toward another after the example (*margin*) of Christ Jesus.—Rom. xv. 5.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.—Phi. ii. 5.

I MIGHT imitate a man in his dress, in his walk, in his speech, in his mode of living, and in other respects, and yet be no more like *him* than a wolf in sheep's clothing is a sheep, or a statue is the man whom it is meant to represent. It is union and fellowship with another, and the possession of his spirit, that make me really like him, and not the imitation of the details of his personal appearances and habits.

Thus I might dress as Christ dressed, I might live as He lived as regards eating and drinking, mode of sleeping, sitting, and walking; I might speak the language He spoke, and even repeat the sayings He uttered, and yet be no more like *Him* than a Pharisee who hated Him to the very death.

On the other hand, I may in all these respects be as unlike Him as an African is unlike an Englishman, and yet be as much like Him in other respects as was Paul or John the Apostle.

It is His Spirit living and reigning in me that must make me like *Him*. I might use a variety of human means to conform me to the external phases of His personal or social life; but His Spirit, and He alone, can make me like Him in humility, meekness, patience, gentleness, forgiveness, lovingness, kindness; like Him in His devotion to the will of His Father, in His self-sacrifice in living and dying for others. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

May I thirst for this life-giving stream!—the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. In the measure in which His Spirit lives in me I am like Him, and no farther. O may I be *filled* with His Spirit, that I may be filled with the *living* Christ, and so not merely *imitate* Him but *resemble* Him, according to my capacity and powers.

Spirit of Jesus! come and fill me with Thyself!

O GIVE us hearts to love like Thee, like Thee, O Lord, to grieve Far more for others' sins than all the wrongs that we receive; One with Thyself, may every eye, in us, Thy brethren, see The gentleness and grace that spring from union, Lord, with Thee.

June 14th.

HAVE I gone no farther in religion than what is typified in the "dry bones" of Ezekiel's vision, when they came together bone to bone, with sinews, flesh, and skin upon them?—

Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.—Ez. xxxvii. 9.

Awake, O north wind! and come, thou south! blow upon my garden.—Lam. iv. 16.

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.—John vi. 63.

SOCIETY as a whole may be divided into two great classes: one that makes no profession of the Christian religion, and one which does. The latter class may again be divided into two: such as profess and do not practice, and such as both profess and practice. The one *essential* difference between *these* is, the latter have *life*, with which they practice; the former have *not* life, and therefore cannot practice. To look at both as they appear, there seems no difference, and it is no wonder that many who do not know the things of God should say, "One is as good as the other"; as a child may not know an artificial flower from a natural one. But he who is taught of God, and is himself born of God, discerns the difference without any difficulty.

The dry bones in the vision of Ezekiel came together, and were covered with sinews, flesh, and skin, but *there was no breath in them*. But when the "breath from the four winds" came into them, they *lived*. That alone made all the difference between them in their two conditions.

It is true there may be differences in *living* Christians, as there are in all living men and women. One may be weak and another strong; one healthy and another sickly; and so on. All soldiers are not equal in courage on the battlefield; all statesmen are not alike in their wisdom; but all *live*. To have *life* in the soul from the Spirit of Christ makes a Christian. Differences are the results of the development of the one life in varying circumstances, relations, and temperaments.

However I may differ from other Christians, and whatever may be my drawbacks in infirmities of faith and works, if I have *life in the Spirit*, there will be the possibility of *improvement*. But if I am *dead*, only *corruption* can follow, unless there should come from the "four winds" the Breath that gives life.

COME, blessed Spirit of God! Whom the Lord hath likened to wind, Unseen, and yet all powerful, let me Thy influence find!
Come, blessed Spirit of God! to convict, correct, and console
And cheer with divine communion as I speed to the heavenly goal

June 15th.

IF I cannot do a great thing for my Lord, am I content to do a little one?—

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.—Luke xvi. 10.

She hath done what she could.—Mark xiv. 8.

A CUP of cold water given to a disciple of Christ in His name, receives from Him its reward. To do any act of kindness to one of the least of His children is to be a "good and faithful servant," and secures a participation in His heavenly joy. The widow who cast only a farthing into the treasury elicited His notice. She who did "what she could" in only anointing His head with ointment, so pleased Him with her motive that He said, "Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark xiv. 9).

I have seen a little girl of three years pick up a needle from the floor, and run with delight to give it to her mother, and the mother received it with smiles of joy, as though it had been a sovereign, because of the joy with which it had been done by her little daughter. So our blessed Master receives any little act of service we do for Him. Whatsoever we *give* much or little; whatsoever we *do* a small thing or great as judged by ourselves and others, let us do and give according to our ability and with the same pure motive.

There was once a little boy coming home late from school along a dyke in Holland. He noticed that through a tiny hole in that bank the tide was finding entrance. He calculated that if not stopped it would soon widen into a dangerous gap. He thrust his finger into the hole, and found that it closed up the dangerous though tiny stream. So there he determined to remain till other help came, or till the tide had turned! And there, in loneliness and darkness the brave child sat for many hours, till the ebb came, and by his presence of mind and endurance, men said he had probably saved the low lands from a dangerous inundation!

With a glad heart and free, may I do anything I can to avert evil and to extend good, for the honour and glory of my exalted Saviour!

THOU usest all Thy works, Each weakest thing that be:

Each has a service of its own, For all things wait on Thee.

All things do serve Thee here, All creatures great and small:

Make use of me, of me, my God, Thou Maker of us all.

June 16th.

DO I show long-suffering towards others as the Lord does towards me?—

The Lord . . . is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—2 Peter iii. 9.

The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.—2 Peter iii. 20.
Love suffereth long.—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

HOW impatient we are of the sins and failings of others, and how tolerant and forbearing with our own! We do not consider the long-suffering of God towards us in our conduct towards Him: how if He shows us compassion in our failings, we ought to show compassion to others in their failings.

There is a story recorded in Jewish books, that when Abraham sat at his tent-door, according to his custom, awaiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven? The old man replied that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God; at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, in an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham, and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, I thrust him away because he did not worship Thee. God answered him, I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured Me; and couldst not thou endure him for one night, when he gave thee no trouble? Upon this, says the story, Abraham fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment, and wise instruction.

May I from this story learn to be patient with others in their sins, as the Great God is, and especially as He is so long-suffering towards me. Rather than judge and condemn them, let me instruct them in the way of truth. If they worship not my God and Saviour, let me in spirit, teaching, and conduct, show them the wisdom and benefit of doing so.

God of Abraham, help me to walk before Thee and be perfect!

HOW kind are Thy compassions, Lord! how slow Thine anger moves! But soon He sends His pardoning word, to cheer the souls He loves. Creatures, with all their endless race, Thy power and praise proclaim; But we who taste Thy richer grace, delight to bless Thy name.

June 17th.

WITH such an abundance of literature of all kinds and at all prices, do I neglect the Word of God?—

The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.—Ps. cxix. 72.

Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.—Ps. cxix. 11.

Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.—Jer. xv. 16

I rejoice at Thy word as one that findeth great spoil.—Ps. cxix. 162.

IN these days of popular, secular, religious, and quasi-religious literature, there is danger of its so engrossing the time and attention of the people that the Bible shall become a neglected Book. Instead of this being the standard of Christian faith and practice, we are liable to be guided by the theories and opinions of men, and to be exposed to the uncertainties and errors attached to the same.

This will apply to me personally, and I will be on my guard. If I allow the sweeping torrents of popular literature, whether secular or religious, to carry me away from a personal reading and study of the living word of God, I shall be in danger of making shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. What should I think of a man who shut out the sun-light from his house, and used candles, or even gas, in its place? Shall I lay aside the Bible as the supreme light of truth, and be guided by the taper-lights of human sentiments, whatever they may happen to be? A mariner at sea does not steer his vessel by the changing winds and waters. He knows the port he wants to reach, and he aims at it, *guided by the compass*. He may have wise men and good books on board, but he consults them not as to how he should steer his vessel. The compass *alone* is trusted. Thus may I trust the word of God in sailing over life's sea to the port of the Better Country.

Whilst I read the outflow of human thought in as many forms and degrees as I can, I will not permit this to supersede the *Book of God*. This is my compass and chart. I will read and study *this*, to learn the course I should take. I will make it my standard by which to judge all other books. To the law and to the testimony, if they agree not with them in their teaching of faith and life in Jesus, then I will lay them aside, and be guided by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

THE word of God, my only chart, my only lamp and guide,

By it I see my way to go; I want no light beside.

The word of man, like man himself, is never at one stay,

But Thy own word, dear blessed Lord, shall never pass away.

June 18th.

SEEING the peculiar dangers of riches and of poverty, do I use the prayer of "Agur the son of Jakeh" as expressive of my desires before God?—

Two things have I required of Thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.—Prov. xxx. 7-9.

Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation —Deut. xxxii. 15.

TO walk on the extreme left or extreme right of a path, on each side of which is a deep gulf, would be dangerous. But to walk in the *middle*, no one would deny that would be safest. If a man fall over a precipice on the one hand or on the other, the consequences might be the same. When Christian was going up "Hill Difficulty," he saw a lion on each side of the way, and was afraid to go on, when he heard a voice saying, "Be not afraid: the lions are chained. Keep in the middle of the road, and they cannot reach you."

To be rich, to be vain, to tell lies, to be full, to deny God, and to ask flippantly, "Who is the Lord?" or, to be poor and steal, and take the name of God in vain, what difference is there morally? Weighed in the balances, both are found wanting. Considering the advantages of the rich, however, alongside those of the poor, one might say, the rich are more culpable than the poor; but in the eye of law the relative condition of each does not count in considering moral deeds, in their character and deserts.

It does not, however, follow that if I walk in the *middle* course, and have "neither poverty nor riches," but only have "things convenient," that I shall neither do as the rich or the poor morally. A middle way of life is no guarantee of moral rectitude as judged by the Divine law. I may, as many that I have known, be vain, tell lies, and deny God. Still, the danger is not so great. The preponderance of moral delinquencies in life are found among the rich and the poor.

O God, I would ask Thee then, as Agur, that I may be favoured, as he asked to be, so that I may walk before Thee in righteousness and truth. But, Lord, without Thy grace, I cannot walk thus in any condition of life.

GIVE me a calm, a thankful heart, from every murmur free:
The blessings of Thy grace impart, and make me live to Thee.
Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine, my path of life attend:
Thy presence through my journey shine, and crown my journey's end.

June 19th.

DO I ever call to mind, for my assurance and joy, what God did with my sins when He forgave me?—

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.—Ps. ciii. 12.

I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.—Isa. xliii. 25.

He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us: He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.—Mt. vii. 18, 19.

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June 18th.

SEEING the peculiar dangers of riches and of poverty, do I use the prayer of "Agur the son of Jakeh" as expressive of my desires before God?—

Two things have I required of Thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.—Prov. xxx. 7-9.

Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation —Deut. xxxii. 15.

TO walk on the extreme left or extreme right of a path, on each side of which is a deep gulf, would be dangerous. But to walk in the *middle*, no one would deny that would be safest. If a man fall over a precipice on the one hand or on the other, the consequences might be the same. When Christian was going up "Hill Difficulty," he saw a lion on each side of the way, and was afraid to go on, when he heard a voice saying, "Be not afraid: the lions are chained. Keep in the middle of the road, and they cannot reach you."

To be rich, to be vain, to tell lies, to be full, to deny God, and to ask flippantly, "Who is the Lord?" or, to be poor and steal, and take the name of God in vain, what difference is there morally? Weighed in the balances, both are found wanting. Considering the advantages of the rich, however, alongside those of the poor, one might say, the rich are more culpable than the poor; but in the eye of law the relative condition of each does not count in considering moral deeds, in their character and deserts.

It does not, however, follow that if I walk in the *middle* course, and have "neither poverty nor riches," but only have "things convenient," that I shall neither do as the rich or the poor morally. A middle way of life is no guarantee of moral rectitude as judged by the Divine law. I may, as many that I have known, be vain, tell lies, and deny God. Still, the danger is not so great. The preponderance of moral delinquencies in life are found among the rich and the poor.

O God, I would ask Thee then, as Agur, that I may be favoured, as he asked to be, so that I may walk before Thee in righteousness and truth. But, Lord, without Thy grace, I cannot walk thus in any condition of life.

GIVE me a calm, a thankful heart, from every murmur free:
The blessings of Thy grace impart, and make me live to Thee.
Let the sweet hope that Thou art mine, my path of life attend:
Thy presence through my journey shine, and crown my journey's end.

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June 20th.

DO I desire and am I seeking after knowledge of God as He is revealed in the Lord Jesus?—

In Him (Jesus) dwell-eth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.—Col. ii. 9.

He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.—John xiv. 9.

I and My Father are one.—John x. 30.

He is the image of the invisible God.—Col. i. 15.

The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.—2 Cor. iv. 6.

KNOWLEDGE of God, as the knowledge of a man, may be found in many ways. According to the source whence we derive it, so will be its nature and influence. Find it in Nature, and it will be similar to that which is acquired of an author from the study of his works. If I find it in myself, it will simply be the image of my imagination, desire, or vanity. Receive it from man, and it will be as diversified and contradictory as man's opinions and sentiments. Seek it in the religions of the nations, and it will vary as those religions vary. As a man or a nation thinks of its God, so is he to it. "For all people will walk everyone in the name of his God" (Micah iv. 5).

I will not depend on my knowledge of God conveyed from any of these sources. There must be another, certainly; if not, I would almost as soon live in blissful ignorance of Him, and patiently wait the revelations of Himself beyond the boundaries of this transient life.

There is another way in which I can come to the knowledge of God. "God was manifest in the flesh." In whose flesh? In the flesh of Man, and one Man only, since the world began. *Only one!* Then there is no mistake. That One is Jesus, His only begotten Son. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." He was never in any other for that purpose. In whom should I look for the Father but in the Son? "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." In Him, yea, in His *face*, I see the glory of the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and this sufficeth. As I see the Son in His Spirit, life, and works, Who else do I see save the Father? "He doeth the works." He is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. And what an expression and revelation of the Person of the Father is the Son; in the beauty of His holiness, in the perfection of His love, in the fulness of His Godhead! Here the whole Deity is known.

O WAY divine, through gloom and strife bring me Thy Father's face to see;

O heavenly Truth, O precious Life, lead me through toil to rest in Thee.

June 21st.

SHOULD I, as a believer in Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Pattern, be united to, and hold fellowship with, those who do not stand in the same relationship to Him as I do?—

Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? And what communion hath light with darkness ? And what concord hath Christ with Belial ? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.—2 Cor. vi. 14-17.

THE sad results that have followed unequal unions in marriages, in friendships, in companionships, and in business partnerships, are more than can be told. Would that young people especially would study them as a warning !

The Christian religion does not deprive us of liberty, but it lays down principles, and gives precepts, according to which, as Christians, we are bound to be guided in its use. If we ignore these, and, moved by passion, sentiment, public opinion, or social interests, think we have safer ground to go upon, or, at least, think we may venture in the questionable course, and trust to our wisdom and strength to preserve us from wrong ; then, upon us come the consequences. We know that antipathies in nature will not agree, as light and darkness, oil and water. So antipathies in religion : Christ and Belial, righteousness and unrighteousness, have no fellowship ; and if we think to bring them together and make them one, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Will a sheep unite with a lion, or a dove with a hawk, or an angel with a demon ?

A pious young lady, engaged to be married to a young gentleman, heard him ridicule religion in her presence. "From this moment, sir," she said, "when I discover that you do not regard religion, I cease to be yours. He that does not love and honour God can never love his wife constantly and sincerely." Noble woman !

An Athenian who hesitated to give his daughter in marriage to a man of worth with a small fortune, or to a rich man with no other recommendation, went to consult Themistocles on the question. His answer was, "I would bestow my daughter on a man without money rather than upon money without a man."

MEN of worldly, low design, let not these Thy people join,
Poison our simplicity, drag us from our trust in Thee.
Save us from the great and wise, till they sink in their own eyes,
Tame to Thy yoke submit, lay their honours at Thy feet ;
Never let the world break in ; fix a mighty gulf between :
Keep us little and unknown, prized and loved by God alone.

June 22nd.

HAVE I the sweet and blessed assurance that all things work together for good?—

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.—Rom. viii. 28.

All things are for your sakes.—2 Cor. iv. 15.

EVEN though I may doubt my love to God, I do not doubt His love to me. If I *confide* in His love, I am sure His power and wisdom will concur with His love to do only what is for the best. I may not see how or why it is so. In fact, my reason and my feeling may sometimes go against my assurance. But this must not give way to them in a matter of this kind. I can wait to see the *end*. That will make all plain. Who can tell what will be on the morrow? but with a true faith in God he may be assured that whatever is, will be for good. He will not *know* until the morrow come. Perhaps not then. It may take weeks or months or a life-time to show that everything of to-day was for the best. But assurance can wait. One may go into an artisan's shop and see him manipulating this and the other and know nothing as to what He is going to make, and yet have such confidence in the artisan as to be assured that he will not only make what will show his wisdom but also his goodness. So, as I watch the operations of God in His providence, I cannot understand them. They seem involved, intricate—wheel within wheel—one working this way and another that. But I have this reliance in Him that the issue of all will be for the best; and this I shall *see* when the proper time comes for things to be revealed.

Good Bernard Gilpin, a famous preacher near Durham in the reign of Edward VI., used to say all that happened was for the best. In the reign of Mary he was summoned to London to give an account of his nonconformity. On his journey, near Bedford, his horse fell, and he with him, and broke his leg. "Is this all for the best?" mockingly inquired some of his guards, who, doubtless, had heard of his saying. "I doubt it not," calmly replied Gilpin; and so it turned out, for before he was able to resume his journey the cruel Queen was taken away, and Gilpin returned to his loved work and people in the north.

THE worth and end of all our strife, and all our woes,
The hidden meaning of our life, our Father knows!
All things are guided to fulfil, we know not how,
The purpose of that loving Will we work with now.

June 23rd.

WHAT god among the gods of the nations, is equal to my God?—

His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.—Deut. xxxii. 4.

For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. Deut. xxxii. 31.

Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto Thy works.—Ps. lxxxvi. 8.

THE gods of nations or of individuals are the conceptions of their own minds or the work of their own hands. They can be seen, measured, weighed, handled. They have neither thought, speech, feeling, nor action. The more one thinks of them, or looks at them, the more they diminish until they are seen to be “nothing in the world.” But the more the God of the Christians is contemplated, the more is He seen to magnify in every perfection of His being.

My God is the God of life, truth, love, mercy, justice, and holiness. He is the God of all hope and consolation; long-suffering, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. He is the God of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. He is the God that hears and answers prayer. He is the God that made all things, upholds all things, and fills all things. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is my “*Father*,” and I am His “*offspring*.” I glory in my Parentage. I have only one Father. I cannot have more. May I as His offspring show myself worthy and true, in fuller obedience to His commandments and warmer aspirations after the fulness of His love.

Trajan the Roman Emperor once asked a Rabbi, how he could be so foolish as to believe in a God he had never seen. The Rabbi asked his majesty to step forth into the open, and look steadfastly at the sun. “Fool,” said Trajan, “thou knowest that it would destroy my sight to look at the noonday sun.”

But though my God is like the sun in Himself, so glorious that no human vision can see Him and live; yet, as the sun may be seen through certain media, so my God and Father can be seen in and through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. He is the express image of Him. When, therefore, I want to see my Father, and to speak to Him, I go to Jesus.

THOU art my All, above, below;
Let every earthly idol go;
My God and Lord, to Thee I come,
My Treasure and my Song; for, whom
Have I in heaven but Thee.

June 24th.

AM I, by the cultivation of the graces, driving from me the vices?—

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering: Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.—Col. iii. 12-15.

SO have I seen a lapidary with a rough uncouth stone in his hand go to his lathe, and after a while he has showed me that same stone, sparkling in the light, a precious thing of beauty and excellence. So have I seen a mother take off the ordinary clothes of her child, and put on garment after garment of its Sunday suit, until it has looked like a cherub in its comely attire. So have I seen in the night time the clouds pass away, and star after star come out in silvery light, until the heavens have sparkled with scintillations of glory, and seemed paved with diamonds set by the fingers of angels.

I would in like manner, as the Holy Spirit shall help me, strip myself of every ve-tige of the garments of the flesh, and put on the robes of righteousness and garments of salvation, and beauties of holiness, and jewels of grace, until I am all fair and all perfect according to the will of God. I would mortify, yea, kill every evil surmising, passion, appetite, habit, imagination, that yet survive in my soul, making unrest and torment: and in their place, take in the whole choir of angels, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, temperance. These, living and singing in harmony, as they always do, will be music in my soul, when discord, strife, and tribulation are all around in the world or in the church. With these graces adorning me, I shall be like the king's daughter all glorious within.

O Thou Infinite Beauty of Holiness! by Thy Eternal Spirit, perfect me according to the good pleasure of Thy will. Clothe me with Thy beautiful vesture of purity both within and without!

WRESTLING on in mighty prayer,
Lord, I will not let Thee go,
Till Thou all Thy mind declare,
All Thy grace on me bestow;
Peace, the seal of sin forgiven,
Joy, and perfect love, impart,
Present, everlasting heaven,
All Thou hast, and all Thou art!

June 25th.

WHEN dangers threaten me from the "powers of darkness," and the foundation of my faith and hope seems to be shaken, and to forebode my ruin, do I fly to the only Refuge provided for me?—

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.—Ps. xci. 2.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.—Ps. xvi. 1.

The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.—Nahum i. 7.

WHAT captain of a ship, when his vessel is in danger of foundering through stress of weather, will not run into the nearest harbour which he knows will save him? What benighted traveller in a lonely wilderness will not shelter himself under the nearest overshadowing rock? The very chickens will run to their mother's wings for hiding when the hovering hawk threatens to swoop upon them with destruction.

Even so will I, in times of "storms and tempests," seek my refuge in God. Under the shadow of His wing I will hide myself until the danger be past; I will make Him my Fortress, and be safe; my strong tower, and rest in peace. Heaven and earth may pass away, but in Him I dwell secure.

"When we were in the Yosemite Valley lately," says Dr. Cuyler, "our driver told us of a series of terrific earthquakes, which visited the valley several years ago. The few inhabitants who dwelt there were thrown out of their beds in the night. Frail cottages were overturned. Loose rocks were hurled down from the precipices into the valley. These shocks were repeated for several days until the people were panic-stricken and ready to despair. 'What did you do?' we enquired. The driver (pointing to the mighty and immovable rock, El Capitan, which rises for three thousand feet on the south side of the valley, and has a base of three solid miles) replied: 'We determined to go and camp under old *Capitan*; for if that ever moved we knew the world would be coming to an end.'"

"There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, Who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27, 28).

"Happy am I in such a Refuge, and sweetly at rest, in arms so strong and enduring!"

WHO trusts in God, a strong abode In heaven and earth possesses;
Who looks in love to Christ above, No fear his heart oppresses.
In all the strife of mortal life My feet shall stand securely;
Temptation's hour shall lose its power, For Thou shalt guard me surely.

June 26th.

IS it a matter of conscience with me to have my dress of such a kind as shall comport with my position in life and my profession of the Christian religion?—

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—1 Peter iii. 3, 4.

I will therefore . . . that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.—1 Tim. ii. 8-10.

THERE are many Christians, especially among the young, who do not think that dress has anything to do with religion. So they ignore or forget what the word of the Lord says upon it. They please themselves in the matter; or, rather they leave themselves in the hands of those who are supposed to know what is what in the question of dress: to decide for them; who, perhaps, are altogether guided in their judgment by the *fashions of the day* and business interests. The query with such is not what is becoming in modesty, in economy, in virtue, in society in which they move; but what is *fashionable*: for they say, "We may as well be out of the world as be out of fashion," forgetting that the way of fashion is not unfrequently the quickest way to get out of the world.

Our dress as Christians (with others we have nothing to do here) is to be as becometh the Gospel of Christ: that is, in meekness, simplicity, purity, comeliness. An old commentator says, "It is a sure sign of a base mind to think that one can make himself great with anything that is less than himself; or that he can win more credit by his garments, than by his graces."

Cato says, "They are never good that strive to be over-fine." "Superfluous apparel," says *Cyprian*, "is worse than whoredom." *Lysander*, it is said, would not suffer his daughters to wear gorgeous apparel, "because it would not make them so comely as common." *Tertullian's* advice to young women is, "Clothe yourselves with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, with the purple of modesty, so shall you have Christ Himself as your Suitor."

O NEVER, in these veils of shame,
Sad fruits of sin, my glorying be!
Clothe with salvation, through Thy name,
My soul, and let me put on Thee!
Be living faith my costly dress,
And my best robe Thy righteousness.

June 27th.

DO I ever forget or forsake the assembling of myself with Christ's people for mutual edification?—

Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhort one another.—Heb. x. 24, 25.

They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers.—Acts ii. 42.

They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him.—Mal. iii. 16, 17.

FORGET and forsake are two different words and have two different meanings. I may *forget* the time and place where Christ's people meet for edification, and for that reason not go. But if I *forsake* them, I do not go though I know when and where they meet. Still, is not forsaking the outcome of forgetting? What produces forgetfulness may ere long produce forsaking.

Why do I *forget* to assemble with Christ's people? Is it not because something else has engaged my attention which I thought to be more pressing? Why have I thought this? Because I have not considered the gathering of Christ's people as of *first* importance. I did not so think at one time; but I have allowed other things so to crowd and occupy my mind that now assembling with Christ's people has taken a secondary place. Hence what was once primary is now secondary, and what is really secondary so absorbs my mind that I forget that which was once primary.

This process of things will inevitably result in my forsaking Christ's people *altogether*, unless I stop it. What shall I do? Go on forgetting until I forsake; or not allow anything to make me forget, do my duty, and in this way never forsake?

O Lord, Head of Thy Church, do not, if it please Thee, permit me to forsake or to forget the gathering of Thy people for mutual edification. If I forsake Thy people, shall I not soon forsake Thee? Am I not now following Thee afar off through my negligent attention to Christian fellowship?

Blessed Jesus! take hold of me and draw me back before I, like Peter, mix with Thy enemies, and *deny* Thee.

LONELY I no longer roam, like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home, where you die shall be my grave;
Mine, the God Whom you adore; your Redeemer shall be mine
Earth can fill my heart no more, every idol I resign.

June 28th.

DO I ever seriously think of the terrible consequences of apostatizing from Christ and His people?—

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?—Heb. x. 28, 29.

It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance . . . seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.—Heb. iv. 6.

NO one can seriously think of the consequences of apostatizing from Christ and His people, and do it. If such a calamity does occur to any one, it is the result not of thought, but of the want of thought. The heart has allowed itself to be carried away with deceptions and delusions, until realities are overwhelmed by them, and they rule and predominate.

To apostatize from Christ is to give up salvation for destruction, life for death, happiness for misery, heaven for hell. What can be greater folly than this?

To give up Christ's people is to choose another people. What other can one choose to take their place? Is there a people to be found, taking them all in all, more kind, more sympathetic, more charitable, more loving, more holy?

Then if I apostatize from these, what shall I gain? There is not a single thing in which I should gain. If I join the society of the ungodly, their rock is not as my Rock, as they themselves will testify. Their fellowship is of a worldly, carnal, selfish kind; their counsel is on a level with themselves. If I leave Christ and His people to join the world, my doom will be that of the world!

Christ and His people are inseparably allied. If I forsake Christ, though I may keep up a recognised connection with His people, it will only be formal and loose, which any little thing may sever. If I forsake His people, my connection with Christ will be of a very uncertain continuance. If I value not His, how long shall I value *Him*. My only security is in keeping close to Christ *and* to His people in the fellowship of His love and communion of His Spirit.

AND shall I faithless prove to Him Who died for me?
Shall I requite that heavenly love which bled upon the tree?
Shall I from them depart, the chosen of the Lord?
And give the *world* my heart contrary to His word?
O Christ, give me Thy grace, that I may steadfast be
And suffer till I see Thy face, and be in heaven with Thee.

June 29th.

DO I reflect, for my encouragement in prayer, how God has heard me in times past?—

In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.—Ps. cxxxviii. 3.

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me.—Ps. lxxvii. 1.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.—Ps. xxxiv. 6.

AM I asked, "How do you know that God answers prayer?" I reply by asking, "How do you know that fire warms? When a person opens a door at which you knock? When a letter which you have sent to a distant friend, is answered?"

Thus it is I know God answers prayer. "Verily God *hath* heard me, He hath attended to the voice of my prayer." "It is good for me to draw near unto God." "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

This *experience* is worth infinitely more than all theories of scientists and philosophers on the subject. I may not by my experience affect these, but, I am sure, they cannot destroy my *experience* with any of their reasonings and speculations.

"And *because* the Lord hath heard the voice of my supplication, and inclined His ear unto me, *therefore* will I call upon Him as long as I live" (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2). A man who has never asked a friend for anything he needed, cannot say whether, if he *had* asked, he would have received nothing. A man who has never knocked at his master's door, cannot say the door would not have been opened had he knocked, unless he had knocked in such a way that no one could hear. How I pity the "wise and prudent" philosophising against prayer, when, perhaps, they know nothing at all about it in personal practice and experience!

I do thank God that even to my feeble asking, seeking, and knocking, He has responded; how much more to such prayers as Elijah's, David's, Paul's, Bramwell's, Carvosso's, and others? There is no stronger evidence of life to a living man than these to the fact that God answers prayer.

"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."

ASK, and it shall be given unto you,
More than ye think, and better than ye ask;
Seek, ye shall find that I am just and true;

My powerful love ye cannot overtask;
Knock, and it shall be opened. Lord, I knock,
I seek, I ask; do Thou Thy store unlock.

June 30th.

IN yielding myself as an instrument to God, do I bear in mind that I can do nothing unless He employ me?—

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.—Rom. vi. 13.

Thou art my battleaxe and weapon of war.—Jer. li. 20.

GOD does not tell me that I am the workman to use and manage the instrument, but that I am the instrument to be used and managed by the Divine Master Workman, who made me, and who alone, therefore, understands for what work I am best fitted, and how to use me. The only thing the instrument can do is to "yield" itself perfectly to the will of the master workman. The master surely knows how best to use his instruments, and it is plainly not the business of the tool to decide these questions for itself. Neither must it try to help by its own efforts to do the work. One absolutely necessary characteristic of a tool is its pliability. The moment resistance is felt in any tool, the moment it refuses to move just as the master wants, that moment it becomes unfit for use. If I am writing with a fine gold pen, and it begins to catch and sputter, and to move with difficulty, I soon lay it aside, and take gladly in its place even an ordinary lead pencil, if only it will move easily in obedience to my will. The strength of an instrument lies in its helplessness. Because it is helpless to do anything of itself, therefore the master can use it as he pleases. There must be no interference on the part of the instrument, or the work is spoiled.

I see plainly my relation to my Heavenly Master. I would not change it if I could. I shall be only too glad to lie quietly before Him, that He may take me up and use me as He will, when He will, and for any work He will. It does not matter what He uses me for, so that I am used by *Him*. I know He will use me for nothing but for what is good. I would rather He should *wear* me out in His work, than that I should rust out in my ease and do-nothingness.

Divine Master, I have too often been self-willed and obstinate in Thy hands. I wonder Thou hast not long ago cast me away as of no use in Thy service. How patient Thou hast been! May I from this moment be more pliable and yielding in any work to which Thou shalt apply me!

○ USE me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

The Rose.

How fair is the rose ! what a beautiful flow'r !
The glory of April and May !
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour,
And they wither and die in a day.

Yet the rose has one powerful virtue to boast,
Above all the flow'rs of the field :
When its leaves are all dead, and fine colours are lost
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield !

So frail is the youth and the beauty of men,
Tho' they bloom and look gay like the rose :
But all our fond care to preserve them is vain !
Time kills them as fast as he goes.

Then I'll not be proud of my youth or my beauty,
Since both of them wither and fade ;
But gain a good name by well doing my duty ;
This will scent like a rose when I'm dead.

Watts.

A Summer Evening.

How fine has the day been, how bright was the sun,
How lovely and joyful the course that he run,
Though he rose in a mist when his race he begun,
And there follow'd some droppings of rain !
But now the fair traveller's come to the west,
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best ;
He paints the sky gay as he sinks to his rest,
And foretells a bright rising again.

Just such is the Christian : his course he begins,
Like the sun in a mist, when he mourns for his sins,
And melts into tears ; then he breaks out and shines,
And travels his heavenly way :
But, when he comes nearer to finish his race,
Like a fine setting sun, he looks richer in grace,
And gives a sure hope at the end of his days
Of rising in brighter array !

Watts.

Bring Flowers.

Bring flowers, young flowers, for the festal board,
To wreath the glass ere the wine is pour'd ;
Bring flowers ! they are springing in wood and vale,
Their breath floats out in the southern gale,
And the touch of the sunbeam hath waked the rose,
To brighten the home of sorrow and woes.

Bring flowers to strew in the conqueror's path—
He has shaken thrones with his stormy wrath !
He comes with the spoil of nations back,
The vines lie crush'd in his chariot's track,
The turf looks red where he won the day—
Bring flowers to die in the conqueror's way !

Bring flowers to the captive's lonely cell,
They have tales of the joyous woods to tell ;
Of the free blue streams and the glowing sky,
And the bright world shut from his languid eye ;
They will bear him a thought of the sunny hours,
And a dream of his youth ; bring him flowers, wild flowers !

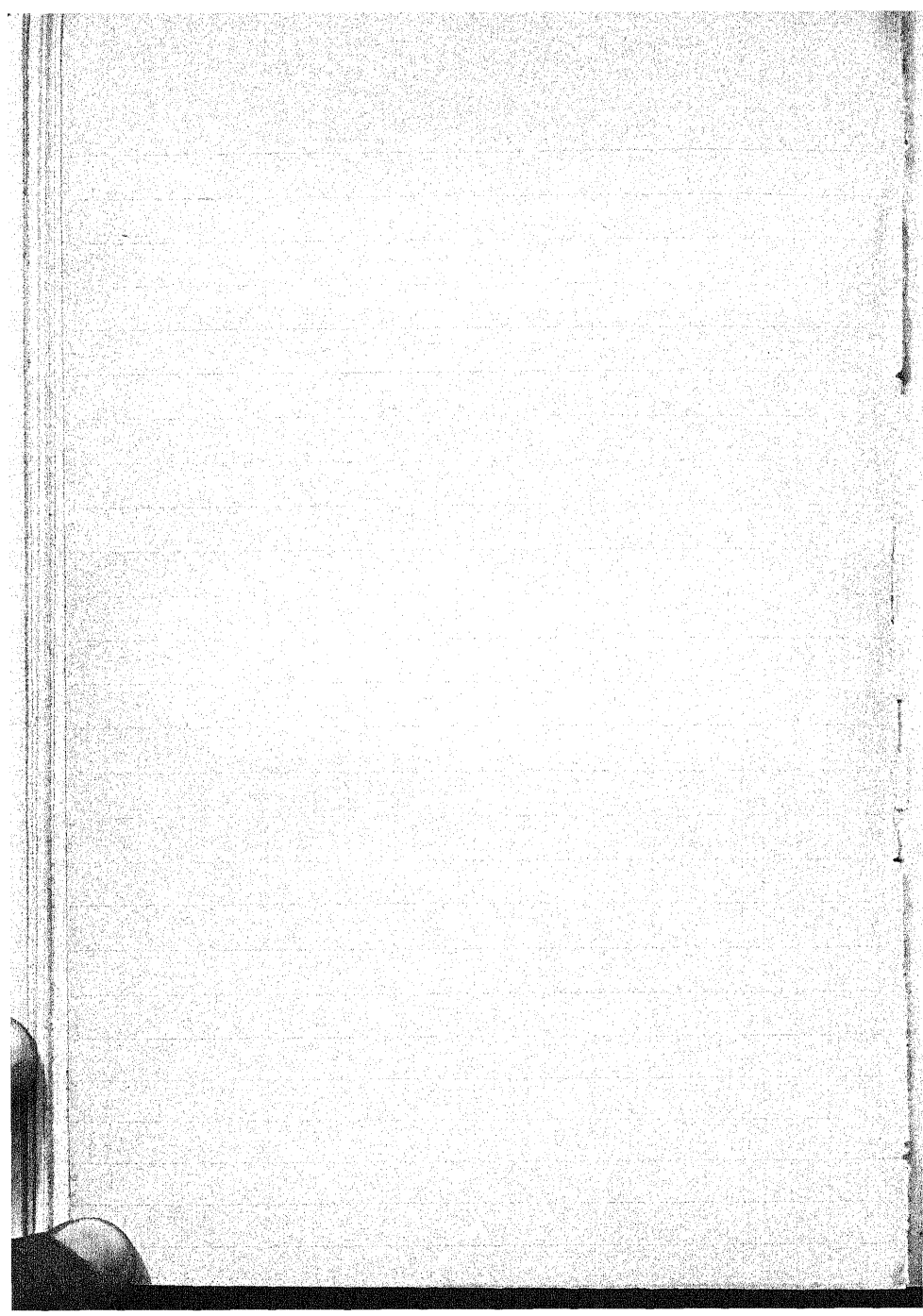
Bring flowers, fresh flowers, for the bride to wear !
They were born to blush in her shining hair.
She is leaving the home of her childhood's mirth,
She hath bid farewell to her father's hearth,
Her place is now at another's side—
Bring flowers for the locks of the fair young bride.

Bring flowers, pale flowers, on the bier to shed
A crown for the brow of the early dead ;
For this through its leaves hath the white rose burst ;
For this in the woods was the violet nurs'd ;
Though they smile in vain for what once was ours ;
They are love's last gift ; bring ye flowers—pale flowers.

They speak of hope to the fainting heart,
With a voice of promise they come and part,
They sleep in dust through the wintry hours,
They break forth in glory ; bring flowers, bright flowers !

Mrs. Hemans.

Memoranda.



July 1st.

DO I renew my spiritual strength, by waiting on the Lord?—

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.—Isa. xl. 39, 31.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.—Ps. xxvii. 14.

NOTHING, perhaps, is more evident in human nature than its deceived consciousness of moral strength, and its reliance upon that strength for self-support in moral obligations, self-defence in moral conflicts, and self-preservation in moral dangers.

I have heard many, in the vigour and vivacity of life—"youths," "young men"—say in effect, "We need not your Bible, your religion, or your Christ to help us in the race of life. We have light and power in ourselves, and can exercise them as we require. It is all a matter of conscience and free agency. We have both these, and can use them as we please for our good or evil."

I have watched these as they have walked or run in their career. Alas, how often have I known them "faint" and become "weary"! Some I have seen led astray into paths they never meant to enter, or fall into snares they said at one time, they should always avoid, or conquered by passions which they thought they had the mastery of. They erred, they stumbled, they "utterly fell." "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" they asked, in their self-consciousness and conceit. Yet they did the thing which they thought at one time, only a brute could do.

On the other hand, I have seen a feeble and self-distrusting one wait on the Lord in humble prayer through Jesus Christ, and receive thereby strength, with which he mounted up "with wings as eagles" above the storms of life. I have seen him in this strength run in the way of God's commandments without being weary, and walk in His statutes without being faint.

So it is that the feeble become strong, and the weak mighty. The self-exalted are brought down, and the lowly are lifted up.

FROM Thee, the everflowing spring, Our souls shall drink a fresh supply,
While such as trust their native strength, Shalt melt away, and droop,
and die.

Swift as the eagle cuts the air, We'll mount aloft to Thine abode:

On wings of love our souls shall fly, Nor tire along the heavenly road.

July 2nd.

DO I solemnly consider that as is the seed which I am sowing in life, so will the harvest be?—

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.—Gal. vi. 7, 8.

To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.—Prov. xi. 18.

NO one ever knew a sane farmer cultivate his fields with any other expectation than that he would reap in harvest the same sort of grain that he had sown in the spring.

This is true also as regards the *body* and *mind* of man; though the multitude live as though it would not be so. The seeds of habits sown in the one, and the seeds of thoughts sown in the other in early life, yield in the harvest of mature age according to the kind of each respectively.

This also is true in the spiritual world. But alas, how few live as though they believe it! The “life that now is” is the sowing-time, the “life that is to come” is the reaping-time. What we sow now will be reaped then. We are now preparing for the future, as the spring shapes all its buds, and forms and colours that shall bloom in the summer. We are now making our characters for their coming hell or heaven. Because we do not reap the harvest *now*, we must not think that there will be none. As well might a farmer think because he has no harvest of wheat in May or June, he will have none in August or September. When the reaping-time comes, we shall know for certain what our harvest will be. Nor shall we be surprised at what we reap, any more than a farmer is surprised to reap wheat when he has sown wheat. As we reap the whirlwind we shall remember that we sowed the wind. As we reap selfishness, or revenge, or uncleanness, or drunkenness, we shall call to mind that such were the things that we sowed. We cannot know all that is involved in either of these results until they are reached!

May I ponder on this fixed and unalterable order of things! May I be wise and select the very best seed I can to sow in the field of my spiritual nature! May I take in all the gracious influences of heaven that I can; so that when the reaping-time comes I shall have a good harvest both in kind and degree!

THE fixed Arithmetic of the universe,—
Which meeteth good for good and ill for ill,
Measure for measure unto deeds, words, thoughts;—
Watchful, aware, implacable, unmoved;
Making all Futures fruits of all the Past.

July 3rd.

DO I comfort others in their sorrows with the comfort with which I am comforted of God?—

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted.—Isa. lxvi. 13.

The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.—2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

THIS life is a "vale of tears," and many are the pilgrims that are travelling through it to the city of everlasting light and gladness. Sorrow usually produces tears; but all do not sorrow and weep at one time, or earth would indeed be a place little better than one vast Bochim. Sorrow and joy live in close proximity, as day and night. One counterbalances the other. Ere long, sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

God is the God of all comfort. As the Good Shepherd, leading His people through this "waste, howling wilderness," by various means He graciously pours the oil of gladness into our troubled hearts, and so dries our tears. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so He comforts us, and we are comforted." And, as with other blessings He gives us, He desires that we should distribute of this to those who have need. With the comfort wherewith He comforts us we should endeavour to comfort others. Are not we the ones to do it, who have had sorrow, and now have consolation? We shall have no less comfort ourselves by comforting others, but rather the more. Have I not many times felt my own cup of joy run over, while out of it I have been pouring into the cup of sorrow which a fellow pilgrim has been drinking?

Giving comfort to others, of the same nature God has given to us, and giving it in the same way, tenderly, lovingly, sympathetically, is a mutual service that Christians owe to each other. It is a service nearest that of the angels which we can have this side heaven. It is divine.

As then God comforts me, so let me try always to comfort my brother or sister in this vale of "sin and woe."

Eternal Spirit—the Comforter!—not only be to me a Comforter, but through me be a comforter to others!

THE world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest;
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art
Is his, who skills of comfort best :—
Whom, by the softest step and gentlest tone,
Enfeebled spirits own,
And love to raise the languid eye,
When, like an angel's wing, they feel him fleeting by.

July 4th.

IS not a bodily infirmity sometimes permitted by my heavenly Father for the humbling of my pride?—

And lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. . . . For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

CHRISTIANS yet in mortal flesh are subject to conflicts with it; and *pride* is one of the evils with which they have to contend. To this evil some are, perhaps, more liable than to any other. If the Christian himself cannot or will not subdue this disease of his heart, then God will undertake to do it in His own way, as in the case of Paul.

Why was the "thorn in the flesh" given to Paul? Lest he should be exalted above measure. This is twice stated. "What a singular thing is pride!" says McCheyne. "Who would have thought that taking Paul into Paradise for a day would have made him proud? and yet God, who knew his heart, knew it would be so, and therefore brought him down to the dust. The pride of nature is wonderful. A natural man is proud of anything. Proud of his person—although he did not make it, yet he prides himself upon his looks. Proud of his dress—although a block of wood might have the same cause for pride, if you would put the clothes on it. Proud of riches—as if there were some merit in having more gold than others. Proud of rank—as if there were some merit in having noble blood. Alas! pride flows in the veins; yet, there is a pride more wonderful than that of nature—*pride of grace*. You would think a man never could be proud who had once seen himself lost; yet, alas! Scripture and experience show that a man may be proud of his measure of grace—proud of forgiveness—proud of humility—proud of knowing more of God than others. It was this that was springing up in Paul's heart when God sent him the thorn in the flesh."

In the presence of Him Who was the Highest, yet humbled Himself to the lowest, my pride should blush and retire into eternal seclusion. O Lord, if I am proud of anything and know it not, open mine eyes to see it, and use Thy own means to remove it!

THE tower which rears its head so high,
And bids defiance to the sky,
Invites the hostile winds;
The branching tree, extending wide,
Provokes destruction by its pride,
And courts the fall it finds.

July 5th.

DO I keep in mind the glorious truth that wherever I go, in the body or out of the body, I cannot go where God is not?—

Do not I fill the heaven and earth, saith the Lord. - Jer. xxiii. 24.

If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell (Hades) behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.—Ps. cxxxix. 8-10.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him.—2 Chr. xvi. 9.

HOW prone we are under certain circumstances to think of our God as the Syrians did—"the God of the hills and not of the plains"; and so they thought if they could fight Israel in the plains they would be sure to conquer. They fought Israel in the plains, and found to their sorrow that He was there as well as in the hills. Our God is everywhere.

It is said that Lord Craven lived in London, when that sad calamity (the plague) raged. His house was in that part of the City since called (from the circumstance of Craven House being situated there) Craven Buildings. On the plague growing epidemic, his lordship, to avoid the danger, resolved to go to his seat in the country. His coach and six were accordingly at the door, his baggage put up, and all things in readiness for the journey. As he was walking through the hall with his hat on, his cane under his arm, and putting on his gloves, in order to step into his carriage, he overheard his Negro (who served him as a postilion), saying to another servant, "I suppose, by my lord's quitting London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in the country and not in town." The poor Negro said this in the simplicity of his heart, as really believing in a plurality of gods. The speech, however, struck Lord Craven very sensibly, and made him pause. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country, I'll even stay where I am." He immediately ordered his horses to be taken from the coach, and the luggage to be brought in. He continued in London, was remarkably useful among his sick neighbours, and never caught the infection.

While it is a solemn thought that I cannot go where God is not, it is also a *blessed* thought! As His child, loving Him, it is to me a sense of security against want, danger, and woe.

GOD is here—how sweet the sound! All I feel, and all I see,—

Nature teems—above—around, with a present Deity.
When I pray, He hears my prayer; when I weep He sees my grief;
If I wander, He is there, ready to afford relief.

July 6th.

IS my zeal a zeal of God, exercising itself for His glory and the good of man?—

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.—Rom. x. 1-3.

It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.—Gal. iv. 18.

ZEAL for God—His truth, His righteousness, the maintenance and extension of His kingdom, is most laudable and praiseworthy. But zeal for my opinions, my theories, my whims; or zeal for my party, sect, or church may be "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge," as was the Pharisees, and that of Paul before his conversion.

"What a horse is without a rider," says Spencer, "or a hot-spurred rider without an eye, or a ship in a high wind and swelling sail without a rudder, such is zeal without knowledge. Knowledge is the eye of the rider, that chooseth the best way; the rudder in the ship, whereby it is steered safely." St. Bernard says, "Discretion without zeal is slow-paced, and zeal without discretion is strong-headed; let, therefore, zeal spur on discretion, and discretion rein in zeal."

It is to be feared that the knowledge which guides the zeal of many Christians in their works of charity, teaching, preaching, and evangelization is according to the creeds, ceremonies, canons, and orders of their churches. They go about to establish their sectional or party interests, without due regard to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ's righteousness in the hearts and lives of the people.

But I will not judge others, but rather myself: what, then, am *I* zealous in? Is it in my personal salvation? Is it in trying to bring others to Christ? Is it in lessening sin in the world and increasing holiness? Is it to elevate the degraded into the benedictions of the Gospel? Is it to make Jesus known, and spread the savour of His grace? Is it in all things to glorify God? In a word, am I like the angels, ever "hearkening unto the voice of His word," that I may "do His commandments?"

Thou Infinite Flame of Love, enkindle Thyself in my soul, so that my zeal in all I do may be the pure celestial fire!

JESUS, I fain would find Thy zeal for God in me,
Thy yearning pity for mankind, Thy burning charity.
In me Thy Spirit dwelt! in me Thy bowels move!
So shall the fervour of my zeal be the pure flame of love!

July 7th.

AM I sometimes discouraged by the difficulties of the way?—

And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom : and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.—Num. xxi. 4, 5.

IN the presence of all the great and good things the Lord has done for us, how soon we, like the children of Israel, become discouraged! We have had so many uninterrupted successes that when a reverse comes we are disheartened, and think, perhaps, that all is against us. God has brought us out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, but because we have to compass Edom, we are cast down. We have fed so much on food from heaven that we get tired of it. God and Moses have led us and defended us so far on the way, and now a little obstacle is before us, we complain of them for bringing us where we are. We are blinded to past successes by a present difficulty. O the ingratitude of our hearts, the weakness of our faith!

If a traveller going to a distant city, after passing through a pleasant part of the country, come to a barren heath, where there is nothing to please the eye and the road is rough and scarcely definable, should say, "I must have lost my way," and give up his journey and return, he would show great lack of courage, and be laughed at when he came back. But how much more inconsiderate it would be of me to give up prayer when it became wearisome, or cease to read my Bible because I met with mysteries in it, or because I had heaviness of spirit conclude God had forsaken me, or because I met with a storm conclude I should never have fair weather again, or because everything did not go on as I had expected at first, complain of God and His servants for having misled me; and in my discouragement think I had missed my way and turn back? Would not all this be childish?

O God, lift up my soul within me! Help me to look above all difficulties to Thee, whose Hand rules all things, and beyond them to the promised land whither Thou hast engaged to lead me. May my courage be measured by Thy promise and fidelity!

FORWARD! be our watchword, steps and voices joined;
Seek the things before us, not a look behind;
Burns the fiery pillar at our army's head;
Who shall dream of shrinking by our Captain led?
Forward through the desert, through the toil and fight;
Canaan lies before us, Zion beams with light.

July 8th.

DO I feel within my soul warm and intense longings and aspirations after God?—

O God, Thou art my God; . . . my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.—Ps. lxi. 1.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.—Ps. xlii. 2.

My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.—Ps. lxxxiv. 2.

MANKIND may be divided into so many classes. Each class has its respective god. As Micah says, "All people will walk every one in the name of his god" (Micah iv. 5).

"I have read," says Thomas Brooks, the Puritan, "of a stationer who being at a fair, hung out several pictures of men famous in their kinds, among which he had also a picture of Christ, upon which divers men bought according to their several fancies: the soldier buys his Cæsar, the lawyer his Justinian, the physician his Galen, the philosopher his Aristotle, the poet his Virgil, the orator his Cicero, and the divine his Augustine; but all the while the picture of Christ hung by as a thing of no value, till a poor chapman, who had no more money than would purchase that, bought it, saying, 'Now every man hath taken away his god, let me have mine too.'"

Thus each of the multitudinous classes of humanity has its own god.

There is, however, the humble, the gentle, the pure Christian who rejects the gods, as such of all the others. His God is the God of unchangeable truth, of boundless grace, of infinite love, of perfect wisdom, of unfailing power, of omnipresent knowledge, of ever-flowing beneficence, and of free salvation. His desires, his longings, his cryings after his God are in harmony with Him and with his own spiritual nature. Deprived of his God, he cries like Micah when his gods were taken from him. He has nothing left. His feeling after God is intense and burning;—"My soul *thirsteth* for God, for the LIVING GOD."

This is *my* God; blessed be His name! He satisfieth my longing soul: but any other god, however much he give, satisfies not. The LIVING GOD is my God; when flesh and heart fail, He shall be the strength of my heart and my portion for ever! "The desire of my soul, O Lord, is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early" (Isa. xxvi. 8, 9).

FOR Thee my thirsty soul doth pant, while in this desert land I live;
And hungry as I am, and faint, Thy love alone can comfort give.
In a dry land behold I place my whole desire on Thee, O Lord;
And more I joy to gain Thy grace, than all earth's treasures can afford.

July 9th.

AM I seeking deliverance from my innate sin by outward reformation or by the renewal of the spirit of my mind?—

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—Gal. v. 16.

Put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Eph. iv. 22-24.

Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.—Rom. vi. 6.

IT is astonishing what can be done with old things externally, to make them seem new; and so deceive lookers-on or purchasers.

Apply this to religion. How many there are who paint themselves over with the colours of a religious profession, and are no more Christians than a deal door that is grained oak is oak, or a picture of the Queen is the Queen herself. Paul speaks of some who under the "form of godliness" were covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of them that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. iii. 1-6). All these under the form of godliness!

Do I not know that I can give up this outward sin, cast away this evil habit, attend to this duty, and conform to this church order; in a word put on a Christian appearance, and yet remain unchanged in my old fallen nature? as one might appear as a king on a stage but in reality be a poor man. Only by changing the sap of a tree, or the blood of an animal, can its nature be changed. To have the innate sin of my heart removed, I, too, must have my heart thoroughly and fully sanctified.

In no other way can I be made a real living Christian, in whom shall be found no guile. The Holy Spirit must come *into* me as fire to purify me in my inward parts. He must go to the deepest depths, and enter into my heart of heart, and wash and cleanse and re-create me entirely. Herein the "old man" will be crucified with Christ, and the body of sin be destroyed, so that I shall no longer serve sin.

O holy and eternal Spirit, I open now my heart for Thy incoming. Do Thy own work in Thy own way. Whatever Thou doest will give me light and purity.

CURE in me the love of sinning;
Every weakness from me take;
This world's iron yoke of evil
Break, O King of glory, break.

July 10th.

DO I kindly, judiciously, yet promptly and faithfully, reprove the evil doer when opportunity occurs?—

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.—Lev. xix. 17.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—Eph. v. 11.

Rebuke . . . with all longsuffering.—2 Tim. iv. 2.

IF I saw a man unconsciously take up a glass of poison to drink, which I knew to be poison, and did not dash it from his lips or quickly warn him of what he was doing, I should be morally, if not legally, guilty of his death. So, if I saw a blind man walking towards a precipice, and did not take hold of him and keep him back.

To warn or reprove a man of his moral or spiritual danger is as much my duty as is the other, if not more so.

The occasions for reproof should be only such as are transgressions of the positive laws of God; they may vary in kind and degree.

My reproofs must be governed by wisdom, kindness, love, prudence, consideration.

I must consider the wrong, the person, the time, the place, the company, in giving reproof.

I must take care not to reprove one for a certain evil, when I know he has grounds to suspect me of being guilty of the same; or even if I am conscious of it myself, and he knows nothing of it.

I may sometimes reprove in the right spirit; and yet have my reproof resented, which, afterwards, may be reflected upon and lead to amendment.

Resistance of my reproofs must not deter me from doing my duty in this particular.

I must not allow my brother's sin to come upon me for the sake of cowardice on my part.

"He that refuseth reproof is brutish, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured" (Prov. cxxi. 13, 18).

O Thou Faithful and True, do Thou graciously help me in this work, that I may do it in the spirit in which Thou didst it in the days of Thy incarnation.

REPROVE not in their wrath incensèd men;
Good counsel comes clean out of season then:
But when his fury appeased and past,
He will conceive his fault, and mend at last.
When he is cool, and calm, then utter it:
No man gives physic in the midst o' th' fit.

July 11th.

HOWEVER much grace I have received from God in my Christian life, do I know that there is still more at my disposal, if I only ask for it?—

But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.—Jas. iv. 6.

And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.—2 Cor. xii. 9.

I HAVE grace every day! every hour!" says Samuel Rutherford. "When the rebel is brought, nine times a day, twenty times a day, for the space of forty years, by his prince's grace, from under the axe, how fair and sweet are the multiplied pardons and reprievals of grace to him! In my case here are multitudes of multiplied redemptions! Here is plenteous redemption! I defile every hour, Christ washeth; I fall, grace raiseth me; I come this day, this morning, under the rebuke of justice, but grace pardoneth me; and so it is all along, till grace puts me into heaven."

A sapling needs the influences of Nature year after year to bring it on to maturity; and afterwards so long as it is capable of life, and provision is made for this in the resources of nature. So a Christian, while by grace he has attained to what he is, needs grace until he enter into glory, and there is a sufficiency in store for him.

Whilst I am thankful for the grace which has helped me thus far on my journey, may I hope and seek for increased measures of it, that I may walk higher in "salvation and in the climes of bliss": to make me stronger, purer, and more like my Lord. If there is no limit to the supply, why should I ever suffer want? If all may have that ask, and have more abundantly, why should I not ask, and have an exuberance, to make me exuberantly fruitful in every good word and work? Why should I be satisfied with a little grace to take me to heaven hereafter, when I may have great grace to bring heaven to me now?

O Thou Fountain of unexhausted grace, send forth Thy streams to flood my soul and irrigate my whole life, so that I may abound in all goodness with thanksgiving!

HAVE you on the Lord believed?
Still there's more to follow;
Of His grace have you received?
Still there's more to follow;
Oh, the grace the Father shows!
Still there's more to follow;
Freely he his grace bestows;
Still there's more to follow!

July 12th.

WHERE have I hid the Word of God?—

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.
—Ps. cxix. 11.

The law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do, according to all that is written therein.—Jos. i. 8.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.—Col. iii. 16.

THINGS of *refuse* we throw from us into places suitable for them. Things of relative value we put in places corresponding therewith. Things of highest worth we deposit in the most secure places we can find.

The word of God is to the good man the most precious thing which he owns, more so than "gold or much fine gold." Hence he hides that in the most secure place at his command—in *his heart*, which is within him, under his own eye, control, and guardianship. He hides it here in its purity, simplicity, and life; to preserve it from the power of false teachers to corrupt it: so that should the Book be taken from him, what he has there shall be safe. He hides it in his heart for his heart's enlightenment, sanctification, and defence against evil. He hides it here that it may be ever before him for meditation, comfort, encouragement, and hope. He hides it here that it may have a salutary influence upon his thoughts, affections, passions, motives, and experience. He hides it here that it may be in him a power for righteousness against error, irreligion, and sin, that he may, like his Lord in the wilderness, have it ready to hand, as a two-edged sword, with which to defend himself against the attacks of the evil one.

May I thus hide the word of God in *my* heart; the word of God as God gives it me, not as man or the "church" interprets it for me; "without note or comment," the pure, uncorrupted word of God. May it be in *me*, pre-eminent in authority. May my heart take nothing into it that does not harmonize with that and pay homage to it.

God of the word, when Thy word is in my heart, seal my heart, so that it shall be secure against all religious false teachers, who would rob me of it, and give me instead their uncertain traditions of men!

O LET Thy word within my heart
Be but the echo of Thy voice;
To me Thy saving Truth impart,
And make my inmost soul rejoice!

July 13th.

AS I see the gardens and fields abounding with their varied harvests of fruits and corn, do I in them recognize the goodness of God? And does God see corresponding fruitfulness in my Christian life?—

Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.—Ps. lxxv. 10-13.

Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.—John xv. 8.

Abounding therein with thanksgiving.—Col. ii. 7.

THE sun is shining in his strength. The heavens are free from clouds. The air is vocal with the music of birds. The trees are clothed with rich foliage. The meadows are luxuriant with verdure. The gardens are full of fruit and vegetables. The fields are covered with ripening harvests of corn. All nature is full of the goodness of the Lord.

How is it with me in my spiritual kingdom? Alas! Am I not therein too much like a winter season? Am I not cold, dark, fruitless?

It ought not to be so. It is my own fault. All the influences of heaven come streaming upon me to make me bright, pleasant, fragrant, fruitful. But I am too impervious to them. I am too much like the rock, which takes in neither dew nor rain nor sunshine that falls upon it. I move too much in spheres of worldliness, selfishness, and unbelief, for heavenly influences to affect me. I do not plough up the fallow ground and sow to myself in righteousness. Hence the Sun of heaven, and the rain from on high, fail to produce in me the fruits of holiness to God's praise. So it is that while at this season all nature is productive, I am barren as a garden in the frosts of winter.

O that I might have the *will* to bring myself more into conjunction with the life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the Breath of the Four Winds, the dews of divine grace, and the rain from heaven: so that in me there may be a state of grace similar to what I see in nature around me.

O Thou life-giving Spirit, come and possess me fully. From Thyself may there come through me much of Thy fruit, that the Father may be glorified! May I be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus unto the glory and praise of God."

CREATOR Spirit, work in me
The wonders of Thy grace,
That all my outward life may bear
The fruits of righteousness.

July 14th.

*A*M I afraid of confessing my faith in Jesus Christ, lest I should lose caste or influence among the élite of society?—

Among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.—John xii. 42, 43.

How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only.—John v. 44.

HAD I been seriously ill, and my doctor wrought in me a marvellous cure, should I be afraid of speaking well of him before any one who might have a prejudice against him? If I had been lost in a wilderness, and some one came in search of me and found me, should I fear to speak of him in the company of some who may not happen to think of him as I did?

Now, my Jesus has come all the way from His glorious throne in the heavens to this wilderness world to seek and to find me. When He found me, I was a slave to sin and Satan. He pitied me, yea, He *loved* me. As there was no money or power that could redeem me, He gave Himself even to the death of the cross, to effect my deliverance from sin, death, and hell. By His grace He has given me to experience this redemption in my soul. Neither nature in all its manifold blessings, nor all the existing intelligences in heaven or earth, could have done this for me. His love alone brought me salvation. He has also given me His Holy Spirit to work in me the good pleasure of His will in all things. He has simply lavished upon me the favours of saving grace. He has healed all my soul's diseases, redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

Then, I ask, shall I, from fear of offending some who have not seen and felt His matchless love, as I have, and from fear of losing position among them, refrain from witnessing to the unparalleled grace of my Divine Saviour and Lord? Shall I, coward-like, not confess my Dearest and Best Friend, lest they should "put me out of the synagogue?"

No, blessed Jesus, I will not for the praise of men, nor from the fear of them, whoever they be, shrink from bearing witness of Thee. On the cross Thou didst die for me; on the cross, if needs be, I will own Thee as my Lord and Master! Lord help me!

ASHAMED to own my loving Lord,
Who died for me and all the world!
No! when I blush to own His Name,
Be it my sorrow and my shame.

July 15th.

DO I cultivate in my heart and life those Christian graces which I admire in other people?—

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.—Phi. iv. 8.

Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.—Phi. i. 27.

IT is not uncommon for one fond of flowers, when he goes into a garden and sees some that he has not seen before which arrest his attention, to inquire about them and to introduce the same kind into his own garden.

This principle is followed in regard to a multitude of particulars in the social, artistic, and manufacturing world.

I would fain follow it in the moral and spiritual. If I see one whose *honesty* is especially expressed in his everyday dealings, I will endeavour to be like him in that, for it is a feature of character very much needed, and by all very much admired. If I see another whose *meekness* under provocation is conspicuous, I must also try to cherish the same grace in similar ways and degrees. If I see another who in his life is particularly *pure*, I must endeavour to be like him in such an admirable virtue.

I must thus make it my business as I move in society to notice the respective excellences which distinguish individuals and ask God to help me to cultivate the same in my own character. Whatever I can find that is lovely in Christian morality I must endeavour to practice. Whatever virtues are mature and ennobling in Christian life I must endeavour to attain. Whatever is useful in personal, active service for Christ I must cherish. Whatever is sublime in Christian enterprise I must sympathise with and co-operate in. If in no one Christian I can see *perfection* to imitate (and of this I despair), I must go to Him Who is all fair, all perfect, spotless and undefiled, and learn of Him. Whatever I lack I shall find in Him.

O Thou Who art the strength of Thy people, be Thou *my* strength in seeking after and in attaining such beauty and excellence of Christian experience and life, as shall “adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.”

THY grace, O Lord, to me is Paradise restored,

It is to me the very gate of heaven ;

It is my health, my happiness, O Lord,

In which I stand delivered and forgiven ;

Give to my soul Thy heavenly strength and light,

Clothe me with Thy best robe of righteousness,

And in the greatness of Thy loving might

Fill me with purity, and joy, and peace.

July 16th.

WHAT am I doing for my children by the time I shall have to leave them for ever?—

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death. The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.—Prov. x. 2. 7.

The unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice.—2 Tim. i. 5.

IT is sad to see a father consecrated to the acquisition of wealth, no matter how, in order to place his children in worldly positions of respectability, and leave them a fortune after he is gone, *and do no more*. He has no particular regard to honesty, or it may be, to self-respect. He ignores religion excepting so far as it will contribute to his ambitious aims.

When he is gone, his children inherit his possessions, and his irreligiousness. They have not done much in accumulating what they have, and so hold it lightly. In a few years it is gone, and they have little left, save the results of prodigality added to strengthened developments of their evil nature. The chief thing they have in the memory of their father is the unremitting and persistent energy with which he amassed their fortune that has vanished from them, like chaff before the whirlwind. They have found that treasures of wickedness have profited them nothing, and with them the memory of him that left them is not blessed.

My God, make me wiser than such a parent ! Let me, like John Quincey Adams, leave my children "a legacy more valuable than silver or gold—the blessing of my prayers that they might become useful citizens, and guardians of the laws, liberty, and religion of their country." Let me set before them a Christlike example in all things. Let me be diligent in business, but gain nothing therein which cannot be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Let me teach them and show them that *character* is more to be valued than riches, that purity of heart and life will abide when worldly pomps and shows will all have passed away. Let me leave them God as their loved Father, and the inheritance of His grace as their possession, whatever of earth I leave them. I would much rather they have Thy grace in me to remind them of me, than my riches.

I ASK not for my children, Lord,
The transient things of this vain world,
But Thy abiding grace.
I ask for them the wealth divine,
That truth and righteousness of Thine,
Which give eternal peace.

July 17th.

WERE I asked which I should choose of two certain evils or of two certain blessings, offered me by God, and I must choose one or the other, what should I answer?—

Not what I will, but what Thou wilt.—Mark xiv. 36.

The will of the Lord be done.—Acts xxi. 14.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.—1 Chr. xxi. 13.

A BOY of about eight years had grieved his father by an act of disobedience, which he could not overlook. He called his little son into his presence, and explained matters to him. He stated two ways, in one of which he proposed to punish him. He asked him which of the two he would choose. The boy submissively replied that he was willing to be punished for having done wrong, and he should leave it with his father to do it in the way he thought best.

At another time this same boy had much pleased his father, and the father asked him which of two rewards he should give him. Again the boy said, "I shall leave it with you, father. Either will please me seeing you give it."

David at one time did that which displeased the Lord. The prophet Gad, commissioned by Jehovah, came to him with the offer of three things, one of which he asked David to choose as a punishment for his transgression. David chose neither, but said, "Let me now fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man."

It is wise for us thus to leave ourselves in God's hand to choose either our good or our evil. Though angry with us when we do wrong, He still loves us as His children. If He chasten us for evil-doing, He does so in love, for our profit. If He reward us, He does it in love, for our encouragement. He knows exactly the punishment which is meet and just to answer the end. So He knows how much good He can bestow without spoiling us. It is, therefore, wisdom to leave with Him to give or to withhold, to punish or to reward in such forms and methods as He may choose.

What Thou wilt, as Thou wilt, when Thou wilt; only cast me not out from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

WITH equal mind my given lot receive,
Resigned to die or resolute to live;
Prepared to kiss the sceptre or the rod,
While God is seen in all, and all in God.

July 18th.

IS my religion one of imagination, having its life and security only in ideas and things that are visionary and self-created?—

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—Heb. xi. 1.

We walk by faith, not by sight.—2 Cor. v. 7.

The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 Cor. iv. 18.

AN imaginary or visionary religion is as unreal as the basis on which it rests. It may be pretty as the colours of the rainbow or as clouds at sunset. But there is nothing in it tangible to take hold of and to realize.

The religion of faith is different. Faith lives on realities. Realities are things which exist. Real living faith, as an element in the Christian religion, trusts God, rests on Christ, believes the promises, realizes to its subject peace, joy, hope, love, holiness, and manifold other good things.

In the midst of these realities it "lives," it "walks," it "stands," it "works," it "fights," it "conquers." These realities are as perceptible to faith, as trees, birds, houses, food, and such like things to the bodily senses.

Some time ago a gentleman was lost in a London fog. A little boy, close by, said to him, "Please, sir, may I show you the way home?" "Why, my lad," said the gentleman, "if I cannot see, how can you?" "But I *know* the way, sir, and shall be glad to guide you if you will tell me where to go." The gentleman believing in the simple sincerity of the lad, gave him his address, and committed himself to his guidance. The boy took hold of his hand, and led him on through street after street, until he brought him home. The gentleman kindly asked the boy in, and offered him half-a-crown for his pains. The boy did not take it. He then offered him five shillings. He did not take that. At last the gentleman discovered that the boy was *blind*. Thus without eyesight he led the gentleman through the darkness, in which his eyesight was of no use.

Was not London as much a reality to this blind boy as to the gentleman. Wherein his eyesight failed him, his faith in the boy saved him. Thus may I, when I cannot see my way, commit myself to the guidance of faith. When fogs and mists encompass me, may I walk by faith in the way of the Lord, and it will lead me safely and effectually home.

WHEN I cannot see my way,
Let me trust and still obey:
He who bids me forward go,
Cannot fail the way to show.

July 19th.

IF the world says of me that I am too precise and fanciful in my religious life;—is it so?—

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.—Prov. iv. 23-27.

IF I were living in a neighbourhood where a dangerous epidemic prevailed, could I be too careful lest I come in contact with it? If I were walking on slippery places, could I be too careful as to how I walked, lest I fell and injured myself? If I am in charge of heavy responsibilities, can I be too faithful?

I am living in a world that is not friendly to my life and actions as a Christian; a world that does not love truth, virtue, purity, God nor Christ; a world that is deceptive, illusive, vain, shadowy, passing away. It is only natural for it to say of any one that will not conform to its maxims, fashions, and pursuits, 'He is precise; he is pharisaical, puritanical, methodistic.' But am I on *this* account to compromise my principles, relax my morality, do as the world does, and so become as the world is?

As a Christian I cannot be too particular to keep my garments "unspotted from the world." I cannot be too fixed and established in my adherence to the spirit of the example of my Lord. He was not of the world: I must not be of the world. I must live in the world while God wills it, and have to do with its things and its people, but I must take heed diligently that I do not become affected by it to the injury of my life in Christ Jesus. I must show the answer to the Master's prayer:—"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

While on the one hand I want to avoid asceticism, on the other I must not fall into latitudinarianism. The way is plainly enough marked in which to walk, to be saved from either extreme. It is the King's highway. If I walk in *that*, following the King Who has gone before, I shall be safe from all manner of danger and all kinds of enemies! The Lord God will be my Sun and Shield!

Blessed Redeemer, take me into Thy guardian care, and preserve me from every evil in myself and in my surroundings in life.

RENOUNCING every worldly thing,
Safe 'neath the covert of Thy wing.
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be
That all I want I find in Thee;
In Thee my God, in Thee.

July 20th.

AM I sufficiently on my guard against sins of negligence, ignorance, and omission ?—

These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.—Matt. xxiii. 23.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.—1 Sam. xv. 22.

NO Christian is infallible or perfect in knowledge to afford to be indifferent as to his duties and dangers.

I have need to pray, as Bishop Hammond on his death-bed, "Forgive especially my sins of omission."

From a little negligence or indifference what fearful results sometimes ensue! From one omission how many more may arise! From ignorance as to what we are doing, disastrous consequences may follow!

There was once a Canadian boatman who, waiting on the river's side, stepped into his canoe, lightly casting a cord from the bow round a stake on the bank. Soothed by the ripple of the water, he fell asleep. But as the current began to act, the cord which had been negligently fastened, uncoiled under the pressure. The boat drifted down the stream, and the man only awoke when it was too late, in the "roaring rapids" above the Falls of Niagara. He drifted to destruction through negligence!

There was once a family the members of which enjoyed the advantages of good health. Their house, built not far from the ocean, was encompassed with the fresh breezes from the Atlantic and the pure keen air of the Devonshire hills. The wild heathery country around was free from all breath of infection; the water was brought with care from a distant spring in the hills, that it might be kept from any chance of contamination near the house. But the beloved and only daughter of that family sickened and died, and when they sought for the cause it was found that some careless labourer had emptied a load of manure across the little stream which supplied the house, and the poison thus communicated had brought death and desolation into that happy home. It was doubtless done ignorantly, but for such ignorances there is little excuse.

Thus through ignorance or negligence I may cause the ruin of myself or others.

MY soul with Thy whole armour arm;
In each approach of sin alarm,
And show the danger near;
Surround, sustain, and strengthen me,
And fill with godly jealousy,
And sanctifying fear.

July 21st.

DO I make my emotions the standard of my religion?—

And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.—Phi. i. 9-11.

RELIGION without emotion is monotonous and uninteresting, if not unprofitable. But emotion is not religion. It is only an effect and evidence of it. It is, so to say, its flame, its radiation, its buoyancy, its elasticity.

Religion has its joys and sorrows, its exuberance and restraints, its revivings and depressions. But these are not its life and essential principle. Its life is fixed and centred in the heart, as the roots of a tree in the earth, as a building on the foundation, as light in the sun.

The *emotions* of religion are creations of circumstances, times, seasons, associations. But religion abides in its fixity and centre. Emotions are like the shaking of the branches of a tree by the wind, but religion is like the tree itself; or like the warbling songs of a lark under a sudden outburst of sunshine; but whether singing or silent, the bird is there, and its powers of music with it. Religion, like life, is not fed by emotions, though these may contribute to its enjoyment and interest, but by the heavenly realities of Truth and Grace, communicated in the secret and silent methods of the Holy Spirit. The seven lamps in the temple, seen by Zechariah in a vision, burnt only as they were supplied with oil, and the oil flowed into the lamps from the olive trees, one on each side of them (Zech. iv.).

I do not covet a religion void of emotion, any more than I do a life without brightness, elasticity, sunshine, and other things that contribute to its pleasures. While I want my religion to have its emotions, I want its life to be constantly fed and nourished with those blessings of grace which shall maintain it in growing healthiness and strength. If its life expire there will be an end to all emotions. If it be preserved in vigour, there are sure to be emotions. May these be governed in "knowledge and in all judgment!"

Spirit of the living Christ, do Thou be to my Christian life its unfailing supply of all it needs!

HAPPY in Him who hath loved us and bought us,
Rich in the life which He gives to His own,
Filled with the peace passing all understanding,
Never less lonely than just when alone.

July 22nd.

DO I attend to my opportunities of doing good as well as my privileges of enjoying the means of grace?—

I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.—John ix. 4.

TO be on mount Pisgah and view the “landscape o’er,” or on mount Tabor and behold Jesus in His glory, is what every Christian enjoys. But this is a luxury too great to continue in this life. We must go down into the toils and labours of every-day duties. We must work for the Master, as well as enjoy His presence, and wait for the time when our work will cease, and we shall be on mount Zion with Him for ever.

An old legend tells how a godly monk, praying in his cell, was astonished by a vision of his Lord. He lay prostrate before it for a while in rapturous joy. Then came the jarring note of a bell, calling him away to some lowly task. It filled him with conflict: ought he to go and leave such a visitant, such glory, behind? Never again might he see the same. At last conscience won; he went, did his task, and returned, sadly expecting to see a cold, dark cell. But no! the glory was still there. His Lord smiled on him, and spoke, “If thou hadst not gone, I should not have stayed.”

A man once rose in one of Moody's meetings and gave his experience. “I have been for five years on the Mount of Transfiguration.” “How many souls did you lead to Christ last year?” was the sharp question that came from Mr. Moody in an instant. “Well, I don't know,” was the astonished reply. “Have you led any?” persisted Mr. Moody. “I don't know that I have,” answered the man. “Well, we don't want that kind of mountain-top experience. When a man gets so high that he can't reach down and save poor sinners, there is something wrong.”

May I not be one of these mountain-top Christians! If I enjoy His “feast of fat things,” which is as free for others as myself, shall I enjoy it alone? Would not this be the height of selfishness? Shall I not make it my duty and pleasure to go out into the highways and hedges and bring them in who are perishing of hunger?

Lord Jesus, forgive my spiritual self-indulgence, and help me to see Thy glory in the salvation of others as much as in my own.

LORD, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children, lost and lone!

July 23rd.

DO I remember that whatever gifts or graces I have, if I am wanting in LOVE, I am nothing in the kingdom of God?—

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.—1 Cor. xiii. 1-3.

IT is worthy of notice how many things that are so much prized in society, Paul mentions as being of little or no value in the absence of that one virtue—LOVE. A coin may have the correct form, size, colour, "image and superscription," but if it have not the *true ring and metal*, it is nothing. Whatever excellent qualities a man may have, he is not your friend if he has not the *spirit* of a friend. If a father have not *love* to his children, all his other excellencies cannot take the place of that. What would God be to our world with all His perfections of power, wisdom, justice, truth, and equity, if He were wanting in *love*? So it is; my religion, whatever its creed, its knowledge, its priest, its church, its almsgivings, its fastings, its self-denials, its austerities, its zeal and demonstrations: it is nothing before God, and of no vital use to man, WITHOUT LOVE.

An old commentator says, "If we were as constant frequenters of the church as *Anna* the prophetess was of the Temple; if our ears were nailed to the church-doors; if our knees were grown as hard as camels' knees with much kneeling before the Lord; if our faces were furrowed with continual weeping, as Peter's is said to have been: yet if we wanted LOVE, all were nothing."

Love, in religion, however simple, humble, unpretending, if it be sincere (and *can* love be anything but sincere?), outweighs everything, it supersedes everything, it makes up for everything. It is sovereign of all the graces. It is the bond of perfectness—the fulfilling of the whole law—the nature of angels—the heaven of heavens. Solomon in all his glory was not so glorious as love; Samson in all his strength was not so strong as love. Moses in all his meekness was not so meek as love. It is inexhaustible as the ocean, fruitful as nature, lasting as eternity, greater than the universe. GOD IS LOVE.

LOVE is to us in these last days
What faith in those old times might be;
He that hath Love lacks not of faith,
And hath besides Love's liberty.

July 24th.

WHEN I hear or read of glaring failures or inconsistencies in any of those who profess a high state of grace and occupy high places in the church, how am I affected?—

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. . . . Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed. . . . Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted. . . . Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured. . . . Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. x. 6-12.

ONCE on a time a great oak tree which had withstood the storms and tempests of nearly a hundred years, boasted of its endurance all that time and of its capability of enduring as long again. The next night there came an unexpected tornado, which tore up the giant oak by the roots, as though it had been a sapling of yesterday's planting.

So have I seen it among the trees of the Lord in His vineyard. The least likely to fall in our judgment, and especially those who think themselves least likely, are those that do fall. Self-security is the worst kind of security. "Let him that *thinketh* he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

As I see such an one fall, in whom everybody confided, of whom everybody thought well, who was a pillar and supporter of the church, ready for every good work, and liberal in his gifts and labours, what shall I do, who am so weak and unknown? Shall I be shaken in my faith? Shall I give up religion as a delusion? Shall I tremble for the ark of God? Shall I also give an occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme?

No; I will cling closer to Him on Whom I depend. I will see the folly of self-boasting and rest alone in Him Who is my Stronghold and Rock of Safety. If I fall, it may not be of much consequence to the church, but it will be of great consequence to myself. I may not have so far to fall as some, but far enough to be my ruin.

O Lord, hold Thou me up! I lean on Thee; leave me not. Be Thou my strength and salvation unto the end!

AH, Lord, with trembling I confess
A gracious soul *may* fall from grace;
The salt may lose its seasoning power,
And never, never, find it more!
Lest that my fearful case should be,
Each moment knit my soul to Thee,
And lead me to the mount above
Through the low vale of humble love.

July 25th.

AM I sufficiently on my guard against the temptation to see or to participate in those things in the world which, if not in themselves sinful, have dangers near to them?—

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way.—Ps. cxix. 37.

Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor left: remove thy foot from evil.—Prov. iv. 25-27.

THERE are some Christians who have little scruple about attending most or all the varied forms and places of amusements and pleasures provided by the world for its followers. There are other Christians who without reserve absent themselves from all such scenes and places. There are still others who, while wishing to retain intact their principles of integrity and consistency, are in doubt how far they may go in the way of the first we have mentioned. They ask, 'Where is the line to be drawn? When may we stop? How far may we go and keep our spirituality of mind and peace of conscience?' As a help to such, the following incident may be given, as recorded by Mr. Spurgeon:—

"That true man of God, Dr. Hawker—I am told by a friend of mine who visited him one morning—was asked to go and see a review that was then taking place at Plymouth. The doctor said, "No." My friend pressed him, and said, "I know you are a loyal subject, and you like to see your country's fleets; it is a noble spectacle." The doctor said no, he could not go; and being pressed until he was ashamed, he made this remarkable answer, "There are times when I could go and enjoy it, but mine eyes have seen the King in His beauty this morning, and I have had so sweet a sense of fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that I dare not go to look upon any spectacle lest I should lose the present enjoyment which now engrosses my soul."

And so it is; as we live in fellowship with Jesus, we shall not want to have *any* fellowship with the world.

Do saints in heaven, I wonder, ever desire to leave the beatific vision and the company of one another to visit any of the scenes or company of worldlings? Nor do saints on earth whose minds are set upon things above.

LORD Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the closest earthly tie.

July 26th.

WHEN *I feel the sore of a wounded spirit, do I go at once to the Good and Loving Physician, Who alone can soothe and cure it?—*

I am poor, and my heart is wounded within me.—Ps. cix. 22.

He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole.—Job v. 18.

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.—Ps. cxlvii. 3.

Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.—Hosea vi. 1.

WOUNDED flesh is more easily borne than wounded spirit. The one an earthly physician may heal; the other, only the Divine.

Wounded in the house of my friends, by unkind words or deeds; wounded by my sins; wounded by God in His providential dealings with me; wounded by the desolate state of Zion and the abounding of iniquity in the world—whither do I go to find relief? Do I not too often search within myself for soothing and restorative means, and find none? Do I not fly to diversions in society, and find none? Do I not go to the Bible, to ordinances, to self-seclusion, to brooding and moping over my sins, and find none? All fail to relieve me.

At last I think of my folly in resorting to these. Jesus rises before me. I see *Him* as the One, giving me hope. I hear Him speaking to me in tenderest words, "Come unto Me." I go to Him with my wounds and sores. I show them all to Him. He sees them at a glance. He is touched with the feelings of my infirmities. He says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." He is sorrowful at my sorrows. He treats me as a mother her bruised child. He takes my infirmities and bears my sicknesses (Matt. viii. 17). The bruised reed He does not break, nor quench the smoking flax. He is the Good Samaritan, giving me the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He sends forth His word and heals me. He bindeth up my broken heart. He restoreth my soul. He doeth all things well. I bless Him; I praise Him; I love Him.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

HELPLESS, none can help me now;
Cheerless, none can cheer but Thou;
Thou the true Physician art;
Thou, O Christ, canst health impart,
Binding up the bleeding heart.
Other comforters are gone;
Thou canst heal, and Thou alone.

July 27th.

IS my heart ONE in love to Christ and in receiving Him?—

Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty.—Hosea x. 2.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.—Jas. i. 8.

How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, serve Him; if Baal, then serve him.—1 Kings xviii.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matt. vi. 24.

WHATEVER God gives me He gives in its entirety Is *He* divided? Is *Christ* divided? Have I not a *whole* Bible? a *full* salvation? So it is in nature. He gives me the whole sun to shine on me; the whole earth to live on; the whole atmosphere to breathe in. All His gifts are perfect, entire, wanting nothing. Then how thoughtless, how ungrateful of me to divide my affections, to give part to Him and part to His enemy!

"Some great king or potentate," says an old writer, "having a mind to visit his imperial city, the harbinger is ordered to go before, and mark out a house suitable to entertain his majesty's retinue. The prince will only come to a house where he may dwell alone: if he cannot have the whole house, he will go elsewhere. The herald findeth one house where the master desireth to entertain the king, but he must have but one small chamber, wherein to lodge his wife and children. The herald will not accept his offer. Then he entreats the benefit of some by-place, to set up a trunk or two, full of richer goods than ordinary. 'No,' says the harbinger, 'it cannot be; for if your house were as big again as it is, it would be little enough to entertain the king and all his royal train.' So it is that every man's body is a temple of God, and his heart the *sanctum sanctorum* of that temple. His ministers are sent out into the world to inform us that Christ is coming to lodge there, and that we must clear the rooms, that this great King of glory may enter in. God will have the whole heart, the whole mind, the whole soul—and all will be too little to entertain Him, and the graces of His Holy Spirit, which are attendant on Him. 'Let it be neither mine nor thine; divide it' was the voice of a strange woman (1 Kings iii. 26), and such is that of the present world; but God will take nothing by halves: he will have the whole heart or nothing."

Blessed Lord, I open my heart for Thee! Come in, and take up *all* the place!

HENCEFORTH may no profane delight
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it, Thou Who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.

July 28th.

AM I on my guard against the growth of sin in my heart or life?—

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.—James i. 14, 15.

Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.—Heb. iii. 13.

SIN grows in the human heart, as weeds grow in a garden; and unless it is watched it will soon multiply and strengthen until it fills the whole.

An Eastern apologue tells us of Abdallah, to whom an evil spirit came at first as a fly, sipping an atom of syrup. He did not drive away the creature, and to his surprise it increased to the size of a locust. Being further indulged, the creature went on growing, and made such rapid increase that it became an enormous monster, devoured his substance, and in the end murdered him, leaving in the garden, where it slew its victim, a footprint six cubits long. Thus does sin grow upon men, till it becomes a giant habit, and slays them.

Augustine tells us of a young man who thought that the devil had made flies, and such like tiny things. By the influence of this apparently insignificant error, he was led on, step by step, till in the end he ascribed everything to Satan, and ceased to believe in God. Thus does error sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind. Scrupulous correctness of faith is as much a duty as careful practice in morals.

I must look well after the garden of my soul, lest its good be choked with the rapid growth and spread of evil. I must not only cut off the tops of the weeds, but pull them up by the roots. Nothing less will do. How often have I thought that a certain evil was destroyed in me, when, lo, to my disgust, I have found it showing itself again in stronger form than ever. I had only nipped the top off the weed, and left the root where it was.

With a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," nothing but a new heart and a right spirit can grow within it the fruits of righteousness.

O God, where is my help but in Thee? Do Thou undertake for me. With Thy mighty Spirit, slay the dire root and seed of sin in me. Then, and only then, will its growth be stopped.

THE seed of sin's disease
Spirit of health remove,
Spirit of finished holiness,
Spirit of perfect love.

July 29th.

AM I sitting coldly and sluggishly at my ease in Zion, or am I wide awake in active and earnest service?—

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.—Amos v. 26.

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem . . . shake thyself from the dust.—Isa. lii. 1, 2.

COLDNESS and sluggishness in religion are the results of self-deception. It was so with the church of Laodicea. She thought herself "rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing." Hence she was satisfied. She concluded things were going on very well, and so did not stir herself to make them better. This delusion resulted in ease, in self-indulgence, which again resulted in stoical indifference; so that she became neither "hot nor cold." Christ could no longer endure such lukewarmness. He "spued her out of His mouth."

If as an inhabitant of Zion I am at ease within her, it is a sure sign that I care little about Zion. A loyal, zealous citizen, in the ardour of his soul, declares, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!" (Isa. lxii. 1).

If as a member of a church I am content only to *look on*, it is certain the church will be little better for my doing that.

A sluggish Christian is like a sluggish housewife, uncleanness, disorder and want, are her companions.

Coldness in religion, like a thermometer, shows the state of the heart within. He who now *falteringly* speaks of Christ, may be found, ere long, to be *silent*, and not long after, to *deny* Him. Hands hanging down when they might be and ought to be up and active, bespeak declining energy, which may end in paralysis. May my feeling be that of the Psalmist, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6).

O Blessed Spirit of Light, Life, and Fire, evermore move in me to activity, energy, and perseverance, in every good work and word for the good of others and Thy glory.

WAKEN my soul, O Lord,
And keep it still awake;
O never may it sleep in ease;
But for Thy kingdom's sake
Be all on fire for Thee,
And never lose Thy zest,
But earnestly Thy glory seek,
And in Thy work find rest.

July 30th.

HAVE I confidence in God that He will lead me safely home, as I walk with Him by faith?—

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.—Ps. xxxii. 8.

I am the Lord . . . which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.—Isa. xlviii. 17.

HOW assuring it is to feel confidence in our guide in darkness, that he will lead us safely in a way we know not. To have God as our Guide through the devious, rugged, and untrodden paths of this dark wilderness, is indeed sweet peace to them that trust in Him.

A little girl, about six years old, was very fond of going to her father's office, and walking home with him at the close of the day. She came running in one day, saying with a glad voice, "Papa, I've come to 'scort you home." "Very well, darling," said her father, "I'm very glad to have the pleasure of your company." "She took my hand," he said, "and we were soon on our way. 'Now, papa,' she said, 'let's play I was a poor blind girl. You must let me take tight hold of your hand while you lead me along, and tell me how to go and when to stop.'

"So the merry blue eyes were shut tight,' and I led her along, saying, 'Now step up, and now step down.' And pretty soon we reached home, and then throwing her arms around my neck, she said, 'Wasn't that nice, papa! and I never slipped once.'"

"But," said her mamma, "didn't you feel afraid to go on in the dark, my darling?"

A look of trusting love lighted up her face as she replied, "Oh, no, mamma! I had tight hold of papa's hand, and *I knew he would take me safely over the hard places, and bring me safely home.*"

May I thus have "tight hold" of my heavenly Father's hand, and feel the simple child-like assurance that He will take me safely over the hard places and dark ways of life till I reach the beautiful home above.

"O Shepherd of Israel, that leddest Joseph like a flock," lead me on the future of my journey, and bring me to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!

L EAD me, O Father, in the paths of peace;
Without Thy guiding hand I go astray,
And doubts appal me, and sorrows still increase;
Lead me through Christ, the true and living Way.

July 31st.

IS my religion one of rest?—

For we which have believed do enter into rest. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.—Heb. iv. 3, 10.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.—Rom. v. 1.

Rest in the Lord.—Ps. xxxvii. 7.

Return unto Thy rest, O my soul.—Ps. cxvi. 7.

THE religion of Jesus Christ is one of *rest*. This cannot be affirmed of any religion of man. The ancient Pharisee went about to establish his own righteousness in such ways as kept him ever and always in the round of rite and ceremony. The modern Pharisee treads in his steps. Vigils and fasts, psalm singing and prayer reading, holy baptism and holy communion, confessing and professing, church going and working, with sundry other things, are rigidly and sacredly, if not slavishly, followed, as though in them or through them God was propitiated and heaven secured; as if these were the sum and substance, the essence and quintessence of Christ's religion.

Whatever active duties and work there may be associated with Christ's religion as its *outcome* or as a *means of its propagation* in the world, it is *itself* a religion of *rest* to them who enjoy it. "We which have believed do enter into rest." Jesus has given us rest. Our souls dwell at ease.

All the inner and outer life of such a one in all its duties and privileges is *rest*. He is most restful when most active for his Lord. His work of faith and labour of love are rest. In his own place and sphere he is in harmony and unison with everything around. Like the lilies, he toils not, neither does he spin, to gain grace or fragrance. These are in him, as he is in Christ. Like a tree with its roots in the earth, he abides and has only to live and bear fruit. Like a star in its orbit, he has only restfully to revolve. O this ceasing from sin, from works, from self, and *resting in Jesus*! What an unbroken Sabbath! What a prelude of heaven! How many know it in their hearts?

Blessed Saviour, may I know it! While my life is one of unceasing service in Thy church, may it be one of profound *rest in Thee*!

REST, weary soul!
The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,
For all sins full satisfaction made!
Strive not to do thyself what Christ has done;
Claim the free gift and make the joy thine own!
No more by pangs of guilt and fear distressed,
Rest, sweetly rest!

Nature's Worship.

The harp at Nature's advent strung
Has never ceased to play ;
The song, the stars of morning sung,
Has never died away.

And prayer is made and praise is given
By all things near and far ;
The ocean looketh up to heaven
And mirrors every star.

The waves are kneeling on the strand,
As kneels the human knee,
Their white locks bowing to the sand—
The priesthood of the sea !

They pour their glittering treasures forth,
Their gifts of pearl they bring ;
And all the listening hills of earth
Take up the song they sing.

The green earth sends her incense up
From many a mountain shrine :
From folded leaf and dewy cup
She pours her sacred wine.

The mists above the morning hills
Rise white as wings of prayer :
The altar curtains of the hills
Are sunsets purple air.

The winds with hymns of praise are loud,
Or low, with sobs of pain ;
The thunder organ of the cloud,
The dripping tears of rain.

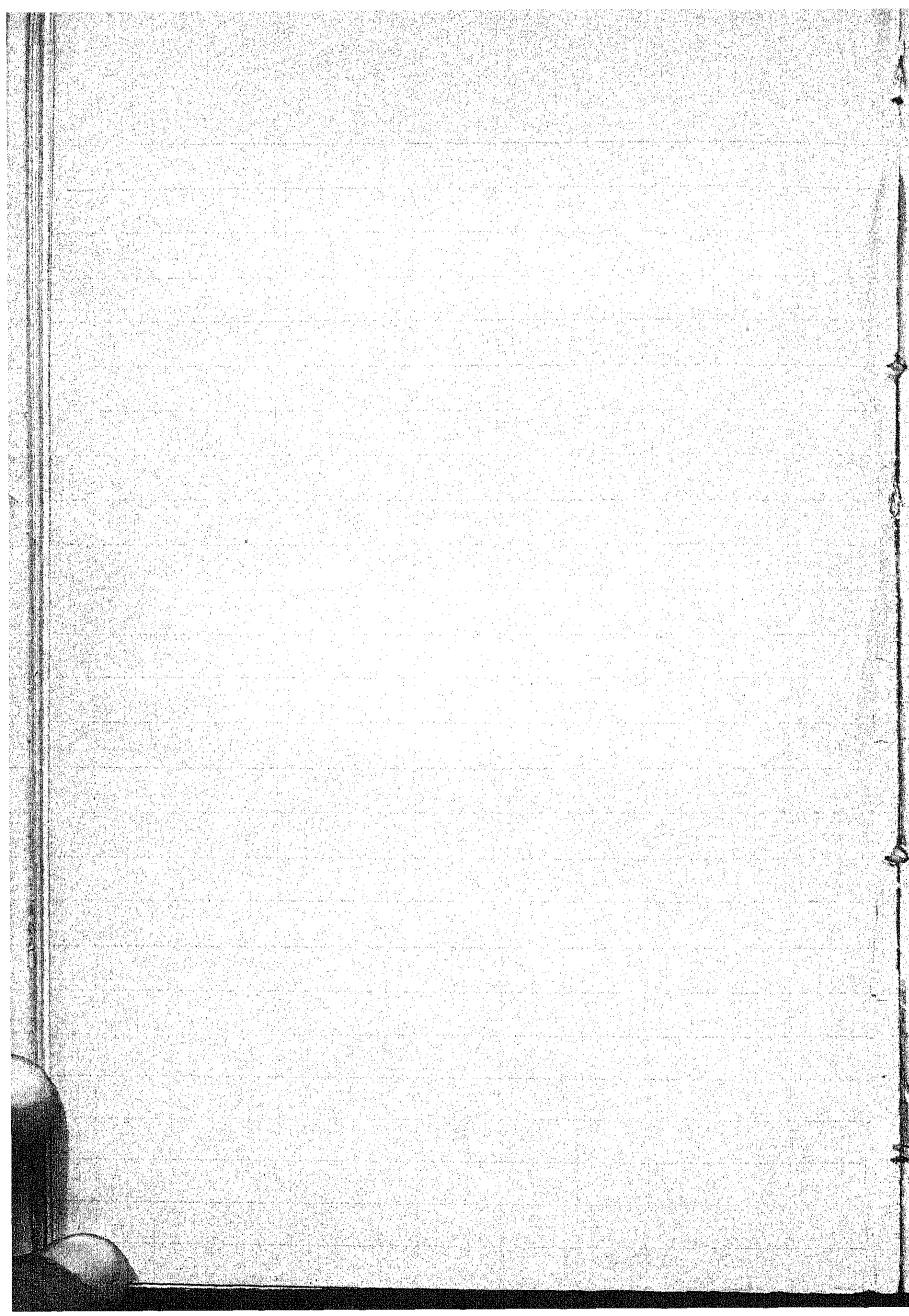
With drooping head and branches crossed,
The twilight forest grieves,
Or speaks, with tongues of Pentecost,
From all its sunlit leaves.

The blue sky is the purple arch,
Its transept, earth and air,
The music of its starry march,
The chorus of a prayer.

So Nature keeps the reverent frame
With which her years began ;
And all her signs and voices shame
The prayerless heart of man.

G. W. Whittier.

Memoranda.



August 1st.

WHAT is the source of my joy as a Christian?—

Let them that love Thy name be joyful in Thee.—Ps. v. 11.

My soul shall be joyful in the Lord.—Ps. xxxv. 9.

I will joy in the God of my salvation.—Hab. iii. 18.

THE emotion of joy in human experience arises from a variety of causes. The man who sought and found his lost sheep rejoiced, and called on his neighbours to rejoice with him. So the woman who found her lost piece of silver. So the poor man to whom a legacy of ten thousand pounds had been left. Frederick the Great tells of the joy of his soldiers when they had obtained a victory, overwhelming in its acclamations all his orders for them to march onwards. Assheton Smith, with seventy thousand pounds a year, was thrown into rapture by such a simple thing as the running of a favourite dog. Wilkie and his friends joined hands and danced with joy when the success of one of his early pictures was announced by the press.

But the joy which I feel is of another kind and arises from other sources. If men of this world, in the lowest sphere, and for the simplest reason, are joyful, how much more should I be joyful in that highest sphere in which I move? My sphere is God, as my light and my salvation. My associates are the spirits of just men made perfect on earth and in heaven. My heritage is the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I am a "king and priest unto God." I am an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. I am justified by grace through faith, and have peace which passeth all understanding. All things are mine. The joy of the Lord is my strength.

My joy abides, while I live and move in the realities of the spiritual world. It may not have the hilarity of the unbeliever's joy; but it has the solidity of the saint's. It may not be demonstrative in its expression, but it is calm, settled, established. It is a summer in the soul, rather than springtide. It is a perennial flower, ever beautiful and fragrant. It is a prelude of the endless joy of paradise. It is "glory begun below."

Who can, who ought to have joy like mine? Mine is "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." My joy no man taketh from me! O God, Thou art my "exceeding joy." "My cup runneth over."

A SOUL in commerce with her God, is heaven,
Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life,
The whirls of passions and the strokes of heart:
A Deity believed is joy begun,
A Deity adored is joy advanced;
A Deity beloved is joy matured.

August 2nd.

WHERE can I find honour, pleasure, riches, power, and long life sooner and better than in the service of God?—

Them that honour Me I will honour.—1 Sam. ii. 30.

If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour.—John xii. 26.

Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour.—Prov. iii. 16.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.—Prov. iii. 17.

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.—Heb. xi. 26.

Behold, I give unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you.—Luke x. 19.

NEARLY all things in religion have their counterparts in the world. This will especially apply to the things in religion that are her excellency and glory, such as her riches, honours, pleasures, and power. But these things in the world are artificial and unsatisfactory: They are, however, more dazzling and attractive to man's natural vision. Hence the multitude influenced by the appearance more than the realities, and the present more than the future, follow the transient and superficial in the world rather than the abiding and substantial in religion : as I have seen a child prefer an artificial flower to a living one, fresh and fragrant from the garden ; and a man choose to take (unwittingly, of course) a counterfeit new sovereign before a genuine old one. Riches, honours, power, pleasures, men of the world are mad for, and rather than not have them, they will take up with anything that comes as the *show* of them, however much they deceive and disappoint.

I pray that I may not be so deceived as between the counterfeits of the world and the realities of Christ's religion. If I want power I will choose that which Jesus gives, and which overcomes the world and conquers all the enemies of my goodness and purity. If I want honour I will seek the honour which comes from the service of God, and abides when the world's honours vanish as vapour. If I want riches, I will prefer those which never have wings to fly away—the riches of grace and of glory. If I want joy, hope, peace, happiness, then I will seek those that are living experiences in the soul, and survive the shadowy and unsatisfactory things, of this passing-away world. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

GIVE me Thy grace to rise above The glare of this world's smelting fires !
Let God's great love put out the love Of gold and gain and low desires !
Still sweetly rings the Gospel strain Of golden store that knows no rust :
The love of Christ is more than gain, And heavenly crowns than yellow dust.

August 3rd.

IS my observance of fasts that enjoined by the church or that prescribed by the Christ?—

Moreover, when ye fast, be ye not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.—Matt. vi. 16-18. See Isa. lviii. 5, &c.

I HAVE in charge from God a body and a soul. I must do the best I can, under reason and grace, for each respectively. For this He holds me responsible.

If by fasting I can promote my health of body, I am at liberty to fast. If by fasting I can contribute in any way to the welfare of my soul, I am at liberty to fast for that purpose also.

My OBLIGATION to fast for either of these reasons arises not from Divine commandment, but from my own *persuasion of mind* on the subject. If I have no persuasion of mind, then I have no sense of obligation, as in many things which God has left in the class *indifferent*.

Then, if God has not made fasting an obligation, can any man do so? Can any *church* do so? When man or church is above God, then it may; not till then.

If I attend to any particular form of religion because a man or a church requires it, is there any virtue or merit in so doing? I see none. God is above men and churches, and what He does not enjoin, I am at liberty to do or to leave undone. But suppose I *do* see in my own mind that fasting will serve the interests of my body or soul, then my Lord steps in and vouchsafes His instructions how I am to fast, or how not to do it. He does not even authorise the church to prescribe my way or time of fasting, much less to impose it as a duty. "*When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites,*" &c. "*But thou, when thou fastest,*" &c.

O Lord God, Who art above the *punctilioes* of religion as introduced by the feebleness and childishness of man; Who only hast pleasure in obedience to Thy own laws, help me in the heart of my religious life neither to care to please man nor myself, but THEE only.

HAVE I not worn my strength away, with fast and penance sore?
Have I not watched and wept," she cried; "Did Thy dear saints do more?

Have I not gained Thy grace, O Lord, and won in heaven my part?"
It echoed louder in her soul, "My child, give ME thy HEART!"

August 4th.

AM I influenced by pure motives in all I do and say, both for God and for man ?—

The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.—Matt. vi. 22, 23.

Do all to the glory of God.—1 Cor. x. 31.

MOTIVES are the secret springs of actions. Actions are seen, and by them we judge and are judged, as between man and man. But God judges by *motives*, which He sees as easily as we see actions ; and when we have the opportunity of truthfully ascertaining motives, *we* judge by them, and not by actions.

A brother, for instance, does a deed for me which I take to be very kind at the time, but if I discover that his motive has been, not to help me, but in some indirect way to help himself, his deed loses its kindness, and resolves itself into selfishness.

If, as an ancient Pharisee, a man pray to God to be seen and heard of men, God casts his prayer from Him as an abomination, because his motive for praying is *vanity*.

If one join the church for mercenary purposes, his union with the church is carnal, and not spiritual, and not to be appreciated.

It is a delicate, if not a dangerous, thing to sit in judgment upon a brother's motive. In this we do not like to be judged. What we do not like in this respect, we may be sure others do not.

Nothing is so humiliating to one in his own eyes and in the eyes of others as to be found out in acting from *unworthy* motives. A man with the witness in himself as to the purity of his motives, flinches not from examination of them ; but he who is dubious of himself stands on his *dignity* and repudiates any interference.

How is it with me ? Are *my* motives always pure ? I almost fear to look into myself in this matter. I leave it with God. He that judgeth me is the Lord.

Search me, O God, and be merciful unto me !

SELF starts nothing, but what tends apace
Home to the goal where it began its race,
Such as our motive is, our aim must be—
If this be servile, that can ne'er be free :
If self employ us—whatsoe'er is wrought,
We glorify that Self, not Him we ought.

August 5th.

WHEN the "prince of this world" comes to me, does he find anything in me of which he can take advantage to further his designs upon me?—

The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.—John xiv. 30.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you Who also will do it.—1 Thess. v. 22-24.

Sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.—Jude 1.

O HOW blessed the Christian to whom the "prince of this world" comes and finds nothing in him which he can use for the accomplishment of his diabolical will. He tries his eyes, nothing to help him there; his ears, the same; his palate, the same; his scent, the same; his habits the same; his desires, the same; his imaginations, the same. "Spirit, soul, and body are sanctified wholly." He finds *nothing* in him to respond to his calls. He is like a man knocking at the door of an empty house, or trying to get fire out of rotten wood, or coming to a corpse with the hope of moving it to talk, to eat, or to drink.

Yet while Satan finds nothing of his own in the mature Christian, he is "filled with all the fulness of God." But none of this belongs to him. He cannot *touch* a single element of this Divine fulness for his use or abuse without permission.

Satan is a discerner of things that differ. He soon perceives where in us there is anything latent or obvious that is his. If he cannot get at it when he would, to use for his end, he will when he can, unless by the Stronger than he it be destroyed.

How is it with me? I fear there is too much in me that belongs to the Evil One. Far, far more than there should be! Even if there is only a desire or a thought, that is too much. The enemy out of a spark can bring a flame. I must watch and pray without ceasing against the rising of desire. When the prince of this world comes and finds anything in me that is his, and claims it, I must stoutly refuse to co-operate with him in its use. My strength will be to "stand still, and see the salvation of God."

O Heavenly Father, send forth Thy Spirit as refining Fire; and make me so pure, so transparent, that even the "accuser of the brethren" with his piercing eyes shall see nothing in me that is his.

THE reign of sin and death is o'er,
And all may live from sin set free;
Satan hath lost his mortal power:
'Tis swallowed up in victory.

August 6th.

AM I clinging to earth as my resting-place, or am I seeking it in heaven ?—

Arise ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest.—Micah ii. 10.

Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.—Heb. xiii. 14.

He (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly ; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God : for He hath prepared for them a city.—Heb. xi. 10, 16.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.—Heb. iv. 9.

IF I have thought no more of rest than that which is found on earth, I have risen no higher in my ideal than instinct in a beast, or even in a worm.

Rest on earth, both of body and mind, while we live and labour in the flesh, is very desirable, as well as necessary. It doeth good like medicine or food. It is recuperative and refreshing to the whole man. One entire *day* out of seven God has appointed for our rest, and every night besides. But if I had perpetual rest on earth from all toil, care, and anxiety, it would be only "for a moment," so short is life. Now, however such a rest might suit my desires or needs in the flesh, it would not, I am sure, be adequate to the longings and aspirations of my soul.

If only in this life I had rest, the very idea of its brevity would make it unrest. But give me on earth the hope, the prospect, the certainty of an everlasting rest in the light of truth, in the peace of purity, in the heaven of love, on the throne of dominion over sin, sorrow, suffering, and death, then this very experience will be to me rest now, even though I pass through fiery conflicts, and travel over rough and rugged roads. Yes, the thought of "rest in the evening at home," will make the work of the day almost as pleasant as the home-rest itself.

Rest, rest, sweet rest, in heaven, beyond the strifes, the storms, the wants, the woes, the mutations of this earthly being : "The saints' everlasting rest !" Through the weakness of the flesh and sadness of the spirit, do I not sometimes repeat the words, "O that I had wings like a dove ; then would I fly away and be at rest ?" Nevertheless, I will go on my journey to Zion, resting in the Lord and delighting myself in God.

Thou, Who art Infinite Rest, in Thee may I live for ever.

I KNOW for me a rest remains

When God will give me sweet release
From earth and all my mortal chains,

And turn my sufferings into peace.

What I have won with pain I hold more fast ;
What tarrieth long is sweeter at the last.

August 7th.

AM I submissive under the hand of God, when bereavement or other heavy trials come upon me?—

Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.—Ps. xxxii. 4.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.—Ps. cxvi. 3.

WE have read, under May 6th, of the terrible disease with which Madame Guyon was visited and its spiritual influence upon her. Subsequent to this new trials awaited her, in order to complete the discipline of faith, and make her truly what God would have her to be. The blow next fell upon the youngest of her two sons, the Benjamin of her maternal affections. "This blow," she says, "struck me to the heart. I was overwhelmed, but God gave me strength in my weakness. I offered him to God, and said in the language of Job, 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be His name.'" Again, in one and the same month, there died suddenly her revered father and her only daughter, "as dearly beloved as she was truly lovely." This little daughter had great beauty of person. She seems to have loved God from her earliest infancy. Her mother says "Often I would find her in a corner praying. It was her habit, whenever she saw me at prayer, to come and join with me. When we were alone, if she saw my eyes closed, as would naturally be the case in my seasons of inward recollection, she would whisper, 'Are you asleep?' and then would cry out, 'Ah, no, you are praying to our dear Jesus,' and dropping on her knees before me, she would begin to pray too."

In all *my* trials, may I remember that the winter of my sorrow will be followed by a spring of joy, and the night of darkness by a morning of sunshine. If I have troubles in my way, another has troubles in his way. No one is without them. Weighed in the balances, each would be found to be pretty much of the same weight, as there are sixteen ounces to the pound, whether of sand or sugar, feathers or lead. The thorn and the rose grow together, but the rose is larger than the thorn and carries its own sweet fragrance.

With such thoughts, I will endeavour to encourage myself in all my trials.

Thou sympathizing Saviour, touched with the feeling of my infirmities, I will, if Thou help me, lean hardest on Thee in my greatest sorrows.

BE my strength in weakness, be my peace in strife;
Come with Thine own meekness, quieting my life;
When I faint in sorrow, bring Thy comfort near;
When I dread the morrow, come with hope to cheer!

August 8th.

AM I guilty of covetousness?—

Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high.—Hab. ii. 6, 9.

Covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints. No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.—1 Cor. vi. 10. Eph. v. 3.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET.—Ex. xx. 17.

TO be dissatisfied with what I have, which is as much as I need, and more than I deserve from God, and to wish to have what somebody else has in addition, is an element of human nature that bespeaks its depravity as much or more than any other that belongs to it.

Such is its character and obnoxiousness to God that He has made a specific law forbidding its existence and practice, "THOU SHALT NOT COVET."

St. Paul says it is "IDOLATRY"; and shall I be an idolater? It will shut me out of heaven; and for a little paltry pelf shall I sacrifice heaven? No, by divine help I will slay the evil by being more generous, kind, hospitable, and self-denying. Covetousness is most insatiable. One might as well try to fill a house with truth as a covetous heart with gold. It is like the leech, never satisfied. Give it a neighbour's ox and it will want his ass. Give it his neighbour's house, and it will want his servant. A gentleman once waited on a London merchant to ask him for a sovereign for some charitable object. The merchant said, "Really I cannot afford it just now, but if you will call on me when I am worth ten thousand pounds, I will give you *ten*." Some time after the gentleman called on the merchant again and said, "Sir, I claim your promise; now you are worth ten thousand pounds." He replied, "That is very true, but I assure you I cannot spare one pound so well now as I could then."

Thousands are affected with this horrible disease, and know it not. They call it "Diligence in business," getting on in the world, enterprise, and such like, as though it was a virtue, and not a damnable vice.

O God, kill all worldly covetousness in me, and make me to covet the riches of grace which are in Christ Jesus!

ALL earthly joy shall fail at last, all earthly love grow cold, Save loves, by that one love made fast, to Jesus and His fold. One aim there is of endless worth, one sole sufficient love, To do Thy will, my God, on earth, and live with Thee above.

August 9th.

DO I find Jesus most precious in my trials, and nearest me while passing through them?—

Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art Mine. When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.—1 Pet. ii. 7.

CHRISt is both a dear and a *near* Friend. If anything more than another brings Him near to His people, it is their trials for His name's sake and for their purification: and they never realize Him to be more precious than at such times. Was not this so in the case of Abraham on mount Moriah, Daniel in the lion's den, the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, Peter and Paul in prison, John in Patmos, the martyrs in the flames? When is the mother nearest and dearest to her child? When is the husbandman nearest his vines, and the refiner nearest the metal he is refining?

A woman was once brought before Bishop Bonner in the reign of Queen Mary on trial for her religion. He threatened that he would take away her husband if she did not recant. She said, "Christ is my husband." "Then I will take away thy child." She said, "Christ is better to me than ten sons." "I will strip thee," said the bishop, "of all thy outward comforts." "But Christ is mine," she replied, "and you cannot strip me of Him."

I thank God for such a Friend as Jesus, Who, if I trust Him as a *Friend*, will abide with me in want as my fullest supply, in my deepest sorrow as my sweetest joy, in my extremest weakness as my mightiest power. When husband, children, friends are all removed, and I am all alone, I shall find Him more than they all. When all my comforts in life are waning, sinking, *gone*, He will be the "strength of my heart and my portion for ever." With Him near me I can walk through the waters and they shall not overflow me; through the fire, and I shall not be burnt. I can face the direst foe, and not be afraid. O how precious is Jesus in such circumstances! Does He not indeed stick closer than a brother?

Gracious Saviour, hitherto I have found Thee more than a brother or friend, and so I shall even to the end. The words that Peter said of himself to Thee, I will hear Thee speaking to me, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!"

BLESSED Jesus, with Thee near me, I am safe from every foe; I will go through fire and water, and no sign of either show, When all earthly helps are scattered, Thou art with me as my Friend, Thou wilt not forsake or fail me, but be faithful to the end.

August 10th.

IS it not a marvel beyond all marvels that the High and Almighty Jehovah should condescend to be my God and take up His abode with me?—

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Isa. lvii. 15.

SO it is. I find the sun, so much greater than earth, enswathing earth with its light and influences, and doing so evermore. I find the spacious atmosphere wrapping itself around not only the great mountains and hills, but the tiniest blades of grass in the field. I find the great statesman, or warrior, or merchant, or philosopher, as a father, embracing an infant of days, and rejoicing over it as his child. If all these are according to the order of things in nature, is it any wonder that He Who established this order should Himself act on the same principle?

"Can you explain," asked a sceptic one day, "how your God, Who you say is infinite, can take any notice of such a speck in the universe as the earth?" I cannot *explain* it, any more than I can explain ten thousand things in me, around me, beneath me, and above me. It is a matter of intelligence that God is associated with the earth in its general well-being. It is subject of experience that He is associated with *me*. As a creature, He created me, and now provides for me as for all other creatures He has made. As a poor, contrite, humble sinner, He is with me a gracious and forgiving God. As His heir and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, He is with me, my Divine Father, loving me and pitying my infirmities. As a child of sorrow and tribulation, He is with me as a sympathising Friend. He guides me in my ways, He hears my cries, He counts my tears, He directs my steps, He lifts me up when I fall. *How* He does all this I cannot tell! When I was a little child at home, I did not understand how my human father was my father, and took such care of me as he did, but now I know all about it. So, as a little child in the earthly family of God, I do not understand how He thinks of me and associates Himself with me; but when I "become a man" in heaven, I "shall know all even as also I am known." Till then I will be content to know in part; meantime trust and praise Him in all and for all.

AND will that God Who rules on high, and guides all worlds in space, The God on Whom the angels look, and see with veiled face, Come down and make His humble home with me, so small and vile? He *does*; I feel Him in my heart; He lights it with His smile.

August 11th.

IF, like the prodigal, I wandered from God, have I returned to Him again?—

Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. . . . And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. . . . When he came to himself, he said . . . I will arise and go to my father.—Luke xv. 11, etc.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.—Ps. cxvi. 7.

THERE was a time when I dwelt in my Father's house, His child, loving and loved. I had everything I needed to make me happy. But there came an hour when restlessness and discontent came over my spirit. I saw that others who dwelt without seemed to be happier than I. I heard them calling to me to come and join them, and to partake of what they called greater pleasures than my home afforded. I listened to them, and asked my Father that He would give me that portion of substance which I claimed as mine. I claimed my body to give to sensual indulgence. My worldly goods I claimed as a means for my sordid gratification. My mind I claimed to use as I chose according to my desires and devices. I left nothing for *His* service.

So I left my Father and His house, and went away on my own pleasure. I joined the jovial companions that enticed me, and with them took my fill of earthly enjoyments, until I lost all my patrimony, and was left in poverty and want. I knew not what to do for subsistence. So I went and hired myself to do the lowest menial service for my living, which was to feed swine, and the best I had to eat was husks, such as I gave the swine.

My state was deplorable. But I seemed to hear a voice saying unto me, "Go back home to your Father, He loves you still." I did not believe the voice. Still it came; at last I resolved to arise and go. I did so; and as I was on my way I saw in the distance my Father coming to meet me. As He saw me coming He *ran*, and fell on my neck and kissed me. Now I knew, as I never did before, that He loved me. Instantly as I reached the house His ring was brought to put on my finger, and the best robe to put on my body. Now I feel at home again, at rest in the love of my Father's heart, and loving Him even more than I did before I went away. Blessed be my Father! I will take care never to leave Him again.

○ HOW foolish, blind, and weak, From my Father to depart,
In the world's vain shows to seek Satisfaction for my heart.
Now I have returned again To my Father and His home,
I can see there is no gain In the ways of sin to roam.

August 12th.

IS it my prayer to God that He would make me happy, or make me pure?—

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.—Ps. li. 7, 9-11.

HAPPINESS apart from purity is unsatisfactory, because uncertain, and, therefore, unreliable. The cup out of which we drink it may any moment be broken. The tie which connects us with it may suddenly be severed. It is often too much like a blaze of sunshine on a wintry day, or like a show of pageantry, which soon passes by. Wherever there is sin in a human heart, it spoils everything that comes into it of a pleasant and happy nature.

Given purity as a fixed element permeating the heart, yea, as the heart itself, *that* is happiness. Happiness is not what comes in from external objects of any kind, but an angel of light, sweetness, beauty, and music created within. He who has such indwelling happiness is like the birds which sing in Eden's bowers, that know no sin; like the spirits before the throne, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; nay, like the "Holy One" Himself, happy *in himself*. His purity may hinge on his obedience and the grace of God, but his happiness rests on his purity. Were there no surroundings of any kind to his being; retaining his purity, he would retain his happiness. This would be *in him* a well of water springing up to everlasting life. He would still enjoy the beatific vision; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is the bliss of purity on earth or in heaven. A holy man is like a holy angel, ever beholding the face of God, through the Son of His love.

These things being so, I will no longer ask God to make me *happy*; to give the effect before the cause. I now ask Him to make me *pure*. If He give me this request, I shall want nothing else to complete my happiness: I shall have it in myself, but not of myself. It is of God.

O blessed Spirit of infinite purity, do Thou in the fulfilment of Thy divine office, as from the Father and the Son, purge me from all my sins, and keep me pure evermore!

THE pure of soul alone have grace
The future joys of heaven to trace,
And learn, in foretaste sweet and rare,
What glories deck the blessed there.

August 13th.

HAVE I the blessed hope that when life shall fail with me, I shall commit my spirit into the hands of God?—

Into Thy hand I commit my spirit.—Ps. xxxi. 5.

I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.—Ps. xvii. 15.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.—Job xix. 25.

My Beloved is mine, and I am His.—Cant. ii. 16.

ONE of the last sayings of the Lord Jesus on the cross were the words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The dying words of Stephen were similar, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." They were the parting words of Luther, and of Knox, of John Huss when he was burned at Constance in 1415, of Jerome of Prague, of Ridley and Latimer in the flames, of Julian Palmer, one of the noted martyrs of Queen Mary, of Francis Teissier, the first martyr of the "Desert," who ascended the scaffold in 1686, singing them. Good George Herbert, the poet, finished his course asking the Lord to "receive his soul."

Blessed words! with which to finish life's course. Committing the spirit to God in death is giving back to Him that which first was received from Him, and which, being lost through sin, He purchased by the sacrifice of Himself. If, besides this, the spirit has been renewed and sanctified by the washing of regeneration in the atoning blood, who indeed has such a right to it, as He?

Then again, Who is so able to take charge of my spirit, disembodied and set free from the prison-house of clay, to live in eternity, as the infinite Father? And who can or will feel such interest in it as He?

How calm, how sublime is the act of a dying Christian, thus committing his spirit into his Father's hands, no longer to be *his* charge in a fleshly tenement, subject to so many vicissitudes, temptations, and snares! How comforting also to the dying saint to know that his spirit will be for ever with the Lord!

O Father everlasting, do Thou now by Thy Holy Spirit so work in me to will and to do of Thy good pleasure, that when my hour of dissolution comes, my spirit may be in such a state of holy love as Thou wilt be pleased to receive, as I give it up to Thee from myself.

WALK with me through the dreadful shade, and certified that Thou art mine,

My spirit calm and undismayed, I shall into Thy hands resign;

No anxious doubt, no guilty gloom, shall damp when Jesu's presence cheers;

My light, my life, my God is come, and glory in His face appears.

August 14th.

WHAT is the respective value I place upon the world and Christ?—

He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.—Matt. x. 37-39.

Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.—Luke xiv. 27.

IT is the teaching of Christ that were it possible for a man to gain all the "lust of the flesh, all the lust of the eyes, and all the pride of life," which make the world, and lose his soul, his gain would not cover his loss. Then, having made the bargain in which such a loss was involved, he would be left with nothing by which he could, if he wished, recover his loss. He has lost the greater value, and cannot get it back again by the less; as one who may barter a diamond for a pebble with a Jew; will the Jew again exchange the diamond for the pebble?

My soul is worth more than all the world; and Jesus is worth more than my soul. If I will not barter my soul for the world, shall I barter Christ for the world? An artist once had in his collection of paintings one that he valued above all the rest. A prince, wishing to find out which it was, ordered a cry of fire to be raised close to the artist's house. At once the artist rushed to secure his *Titian*. The prince by this means gained his object. So, when danger is near, I will make sure of Jesus, and let everything else go rather than Him. If the prince of this world wants to know what I hold most precious, I will run to the arms of Jesus and embrace Him.

Were the universe one diamond, Christ were more precious than that. If every angel in heaven and every saint made perfect on earth and in heaven, were my brethren and sisters, and Gabriel and Mary were my father and mother, they were all to be forsaken, if needs be, for Him, Who is their Lord and my Saviour.

If I am not prepared to give all for Him, I am not worthy of Him. I value the world as nothing in comparison with Jesus. Then, may I not be found *compromising* with the world! I cannot serve God and Mammon. I must go one way or the other. I WILL FOLLOW JESUS.

JESUS, I love Thy charming Name, 'tis music to mine ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud, that earth and heaven might hear.
Yes, Thou art precious to my soul, my transport and my trust:
Jewels to Thee are gaudy toys, and gold is sordid dust.

August 15th.

IS intercession for others a distinct feature in my private prayers?—

And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.—Job xlii. 10.

I exhort that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.—1 Tim. ii. 1.

Praying with all prayer . . . and supplication for all saints.—Eph. vi. 18.

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.—1 Sam. xii. 23.

WITH one or two exceptions, the prayers of Christ, while on earth, were intercessory. Now, at His Father's right hand in the heavens, *all* His prayers are for others; not one for Himself.

The nearer I approach Christ in nature and spirit, the more will my prayers be intercessions for others. It is selfishness to be always praying for one's self, and not for those who never pray for themselves. My prayers for them must be earnest. I must pray especially for all that are desolate and oppressed; for all sorts and conditions of men.

Whenever I forget myself in praying for others, the more my own soul seems to be free with God, and to receive larger blessings at His hands; the more sympathetic I am, and the more prepared for service in doing good.

Abraham in praying for Sodom and Gomorrah is a fine example of interceding prayer. Samuel said he would not sin against God in ceasing to pray for Israel. When Job interceded for his friends, God turned his captivity, and he began to prosper. When the believers met together to intercede for Peter's release from prison, an angel was sent to open his prison doors. Paul even wished himself accursed for Israel's sake.

Dr. Payson, of America, organized what he called "Aaron and Hur societies," little collections of four or five persons to pray for the conversion of sinners, which were attended with marvellous results.

A blessed means of awakening our love to Christ, love to souls, and zeal for their salvation, is intercessory prayer.

O Thou, interceding Jesus, pour into me of Thy Spirit more fully, that He may make intercessions within me, with "groanings that cannot be uttered."

FIRST for himself the high priest his offering makes;—

This done, for others, for those nearest found,

The circle of the sacred home,—and then

For the whole church of God, and lastly takes—

His ample intercession takes all men

Within the limits of its mighty round.

August 16th.

AS sometimes in reading the Scriptures, I meet with passages which I cannot understand, should I stagger at them?—

In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also other scriptures, unto their own destruction.—2 Pet. iii. 16.

IF in the *works* of God there are things hard to be understood, is it any wonder that there should be such in His *word*? If in the study of His works I find phenomena which I cannot explain, must I reject them that I can? So, if in His word I find things inexplicable, am I to refuse those which will make me wise unto salvation? Shall I cast away the meat because I cannot eat the bones?

The deacon of a church in New England called on his pastor one day, to have a talk with him about the Bible.

In the course of their conversation, the deacon said, "You see, parson, as I read my Bible, I find many things in it that I can't understand. I stop and think about them. But the more I think about them, the harder they seem. And then, instead of finding strength and comfort, I go away in weakness and trouble. Now, what am I to do?"

"Come with me to the barn, deacon," said the minister, "and I'll show you what to do."

When they reached the barn, the minister pointed to a cow, that was quietly standing in the stall and eating hay. "There," said he, "is my cow Dulcy. Just watch her a moment, and she will teach you a lesson in theology. There, see, she has just found a piece of wood in the hay. And what does she do? Does she stop and try to chew the wood? No; but she just lays it aside, and goes quietly on eating the hay. Now she finds a thistle, and now an ugly weed. But she does not trouble herself about them. She merely thrusts them aside, and goes on eating the nice, fresh, juicy hay. Now, deacon," said the minister, "just follow the example of this cow. When, in reading your Bible, you meet with things which you can't understand, don't stop and trouble yourself about them. Put them aside, and go on carefully reading the pure, simple truth 'as it is in Jesus,' or as St. James calls it, 'the engrafted word which is able to save your soul.'"

May I take this advice, then will the word of God be to me "milk" or "meat" to feed me in the life divine.

LORD, from Thy word remove the seal, unfold its hidden store;
And teach me, as I read, to feel its value more and more.

Help me to see my Saviour's love shining in every page;

And let its saving truths of grace my inmost soul engage.

August 17th.

IS my hatred of sin in my heart or only in my sentiment?—

Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.—Ps. xvii. 10.

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.—Ps. ci. 3.

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.—2 Tim. ii. 20.

AS in nature, water and fire, light and darkness, sweets and bitters, are contradictory and cannot agree; so in morals, truth and error, vice and virtue, good and evil, are opposites and cannot be reconciled.

If I love God, I must hate evil; if I love evil, I must hate God. The love of God living and ruling in my heart as necessarily excludes hatred of God therefrom, as the light of the sun in my room expels darkness.

I must, however, distinguish between *shunning* or *avoiding* evil, and *hating* it. It is possible for me to shun or avoid evil, irrespective of God or love to Him. I may avoid *open* evil from self-respect, for the sake of reputation and the social good. I may shun certain *secret* evils, which others may not be cognisant of, for the sake of health, a good conscience, and peace of mind; and love to God or even the *thought* of God may be out of the matter altogether.

Hence, there may be found some infidels who lead apparently moral lives.

If, however, I hate evil in my heart for evil's sake, and because I love God, I shall feel towards it fixed repugnance and antipathy, as I do in my taste to anything that does not agree to it; as I do in my body to burns, scalds, and bruises, or anything that gives me pain, and I shall shrink from its sight, its touch, its breath. The *thought* of evil will be sin to me. Whenever temptation to do evil presents itself, I shall say, "How *can* I do this, and sin against God?"

"Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9).

"Born of God," I have His nature, and this in me, as in Himself, hates all moral evil, as it did in the holy Prophets, the Incarnate Son, the holy Apostles, and as it does in all His loving children.

O Lord, may I hate evil in every form, because Thou hatest it, and because I love Thee.

THEREFORE, child of mortality, love thou the merciful FATHER!
Wish what the HOLY ONE wishes!—and not from fear but affection.

August 18th.

WHY do I wish to go to Heaven?—

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.—Isa. xxxiii. 17.

Where I am there shall ye be also.—John xiv. 3.

That they may behold My glory.—John xvii. 24

Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.—Phil. i. 23.

We shall see Him as He is.—1 John iii. 2.

TO find Jesus in heaven among the numberless multitudes of its inhabitants, will not be difficult to one “before whose eyes He hath been evidently set forth crucified,” and who by faith has seen the print of the nails and the mark of the spear; or, who by faith has felt the power of His dying love. All the riches which adorn that splendid city He has, like a generous conqueror, distributed among His companions and followers. Five jewels alone He has reserved for Himself, which neither the sun can equal in brightness, nor the rose in hue. Each hand and foot bears one enchased in His sacred flesh; and upon His side, close to His heart, He wears one larger and more brilliant, far more glorious, and to us dearer, than those decorations which monarchs have to bestow; for it has been won in deadly conflict against sin and death, fought for our salvation. Who of His true lovers will not recognize Jesus his Saviour by these tokens of His mercy, as they throw out their radiance of glory brighter than the noonday sun?

To see Jesus thus, and to be with Him, is my reason for wishing to go to heaven. I would not care to go to heaven if He were not there. If He is my All in all now, as I see Him with an imperfect faith and commune with Him in this tabernacle of flesh, what will He be to me when I shall see Him as He is and commune with Him in my glorified body? This beatific vision will not be with me as with the three disciples upon Mount Tabor, for a moment, followed by a descent into the “vale of tears,” but it will be for ever and for ever.”

Hence the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” will be the brightness of the New Jerusalem. The city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof (Rev. xxi. 22, 23).

Gracious God, answer in me the prayer of Thine only Son, according to His will, that I may be given to Him, may be with Him where He is, and behold His glory.

LORD, if on earth the thought of Thee be life, and strength, and peace,
How blessed shall that vision be which never more shall cease!
How blest when I Thy glory see in light without a shade;—
The glory which surrounded Thee before the worlds were made!

August 19th.

HOW do I stand affected as regards innovations in religion, and in the methods of propagating the Gospel?—

Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.—Phil. iii. 16.

Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you.—Phil. iv. 9.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.—1 Peter v. 3.

For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples. —Hosea viii. 14.

As a *Christian* is my faith the *old faith* ? That is, the faith which leaves all to follow Christ ; which confesses Him ; suffers for Him ; endures reproaches for Him, and is willing, if needs be, to die for Him ; which brings me out from the world with its follies, pleasures, vanities, companies, and sinful pursuits ; which finds its pleasures, joys, honours, in Him, in His service, in His fellowship, and in association with His people ; which will not allow the smallest thing to come between my soul and Him ?

Or, is it the *new faith*, which divides between Christ and the world, which joins the world's companies, seeks its honours, recreations, favours, helps ; which trusts in means, creeds, professions, confessions, priests, ceremonies, crucifixes, sacraments ; which eschews persecution, and studies to make religion as easy, self-indulgent, and respectable as it can ; which only sees Jesus, when it sees Him at all, through the medium of things which "priest," and "church," and the world interpose ?

As a *member of a church* is my faith the *old* or the *new* ? That is, do I believe in the simplicity, the spirituality, the power of public worship as inspired and sustained by the Spirit of Christ, in preference to so much of the artificial, which is of the world ? Do I believe in the earnest apostolic preaching of the Gospel, or in the "enticing words of man's wisdom," the power of learning, the novelties and fancies of men ? in social entertainments, in popular demonstrations, in social movements, rather than in the Gospel as the "wisdom of God, and the power of God unto men's salvation" ?

I believe in the everlasting God, the unchangeable Christ, the eternal Spirit, the old Bible, the old Scriptural means and methods and agents of usefulness, because the new fail when the old succeed, and the new only touch the surface, when the old go to the depths. The new are of men, the old of God.

SAVE us in the prosperous hour, from the flattering Tempter's power,

From his unsuspected wiles, from the world's pernicious smiles,

Let us still to Thee look up, Thee, Thy Israel's strength and hope ;

Nothing know, or seek, beside Jesus, and Him crucified.

August 20th.

WHEN dark hours of providence, or of personal experience come over me, do I yield to their depressing influence; or do I turn towards God, who is my light and my salvation?—

Who is among you that feareth the Lord . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.—Isa. l. 10.

When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.—Mi. vii. 8.

WHAT Christian has not his hours of darkness; when not only the sun ceases to give light, but when moon and stars are hid, and even the “bright light in the clouds” is not seen? He knows not the way to take. His only strength and safety is to stand still, staying himself on his God, until the darkness pass and the true light again shines. “We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.”—Isa. lix. 9.

But this shall not be always. The Lord whom we seek will come to us as our “Sun”; then shall “light rise in obscurity, and our darkness be as the noon-day.”—Isa. lviii. 10.

An American Christian lady was once talking with a Christian negress, living in the depths of poverty. Speaking a little of her experience, she said,

“Some hours, auntie, are cold and dark, and the world is strong.”

“About dem dark hours,” said the negress, “don’t mind ’em. Press straight on to Jesus, and He’ll come to your heavy heart; and when He goes away the path He leaves behind will be full of spangles.”

After a while she turned to go home. She walked a few steps, and then came back, and said, “About dem dark hours; don’t let ’em make you doubt. Dey’s given to try your faith.”

She then walked as far as the gate, and as though she still had more to say, she hobbled back again, and pointing upwards with her stick, said earnestly, “Press on, press on to Jesus, and don’t be afraid of dem dark hours.”

O that I may have such simple, child-like faith in my hours of darkness when they come. Darkness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. “Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.”

LEAD, kindly light amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me!

August 21st.

IN times of personal or family affliction, while using all wise means which medical skill can devise, do I go in prayer to God for help, without Whom all human appliances are useless?—

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. . . . And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.—Jas. v. 13, 15.

THE Rev. T. Collins, a holy man of God, writes thus, in his journal:—"Through the night dear Emmy was sleepless and in pain. At four a.m. I withdrew to my study to plead for her relief. Approaching my heavenly Father, I first set myself to embrace His whole will. I prayed Him, at whatever cost to me, to glorify Himself. I then reminded Him that my child was His child; that my love for her was from Him, and but a shadow of His; I committed her into His hands, assuring myself that His protecting power was so great that none else could hurt me, and His paternal love so tender that He would not.

"I next recognized the rights of Jesus, my Master; to His decision as my Sovereign Lord I asked perfect submission, but yet put before Him my petition. I reminded Him of His own strong crying and tears, and cast myself upon His sympathy.

"I then addressed myself unto the adorable Spirit; spoke to Him of my sorrows, and drew near to Him as my Comforter.

"From my Triune Friend, my Covenant God, who withholdeth no good thing, I humbly asked sleep for my suffering child.

"A speedy answer came. She, who for two nights had had no sleep, in half an hour gently sank into a slumber, from which for eight hours she did not awake. Thus soon prayer was turned into praise."

Thus God gives His beloved sleep in answer to prayer. "There is no time," says one, "for hearing of prayers, like the time of affliction. Then the saints may have anything of God with reason; for then His heart is turned within Him, His relents are kindled together (Hosea xi. 8, Zec. xiii. 9, Ps. xci. 15). Then it was that Lot had Zoar given him, David the lives of his enemies, Paul all the souls in the ship."

Blessed Father, may I in every personal and family affliction have recourse to Thee before the physician. Speak Thou the word only, and my child or my servant or myself shall be healed (Matt. viii. 8).

O WONDEROUS power of faithful prayer!

What tongue can tell the almighty grace?

God's hands or bound or open are,

As Moses or Elijah prays;

Let Moses in the Spirit groan,

And God cries out, "Let me alone."

August 22nd.

DO I, as a Christian, control the passions and appetites of my flesh, according to temperance and purity?—

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.—Titus ii. 11, 12.

Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.—1 Pet. ii. 11.

WHEN God gave us passions and appetites in the beginning they were as pure and perfect as light. But they have been tainted and spoiled by sin. They need re-creating or sanctifying by Divine grace to restore them to their primary state. Even in that state they must be guarded and governed, or they may relapse through the influence of the same subtle enemy, as seduced them in our first parents.

Can it be thought that the Almighty made man in His image, with his dignity of posture and his lofty aspirations, to look down and to grovel lower than the brutes? This is what *he* does who *indulges* his passions and appetites to excess; and the more he indulges them the more he is pressed and dragged down by them until he is denuded of all his dignity, and is become *worse* than the beasts that perish.

To keep our passions and appetites under the government of purity and temperance is like a man so managing a high-bred horse, that it serves *his* purpose in all things; but loose the reins and give the horse his natural freedom, and it may mean disaster. To govern the passions and appetites wisely is like a sovereign so governing the people, that unity and peace everywhere prevail; but cease that government, and let every one do what is right in his own eyes, then anarchy and other forms of evil may follow.

To govern my passions and appetites aright, I need the "grace of God which bringeth salvation" to reign in me. This as a ruling power will guide and control all in sobriety and purity. What under sin serves my desires, will then serve the will of God in my sanctification.

Blessed Redeemer, evermore give me Thy grace in such measure as shall enable me to "deny myself of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

MAY I evil lusts subdue,
Long for what is good and true,
And my duty always do,
May my lips my faith confess;
Teach me when reviled to bless,
Conquering in gentleness.

August 23rd.

WHY do I not follow after holiness and attain it?—

Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees ; and make straight paths for your feet ; lest that which is lame be turned out of the way ; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.—Heb. xii. 12-15.

AS I read the doctrines, duties, privileges, precepts, and promises of Christianity contained in the New Testament, I see plainly that it is a religion of holiness in itself, and requires holiness of all its professors

If I, or no one of its followers *lives* holiness, that does not touch the fact that it is a holy religion, any more than a person living in the darkness of a cellar proves that the sun gives no light ; or a person, starving of hunger, proves that nature is barren.

If I do not live in holiness as the Christian religion teaches me to live, and provides for me to live, the reasons are in myself, and nowhere else. I may have no *liking* for holiness. I may keep aloof from the ways and means leading to it. I may indulge in thoughts, passions, pursuits that are contrary to it. I may mix up in company, read books, and follow things that are as opposed to it as darkness to light.

Now, if things are so with me, how can I, how can anyone, wonder that I am not holy ; that Christianity fails to have its legitimate influence on me ? I am the one to blame, not Christianity. God has made ample provision for my holiness in the redemptive work of His Son and in the agency of His Holy Spirit. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 7). Here, then, is the Bethesda of the Gospel. O may I have the *will* to step in and be made whole of whatsoever disease I have (John v. 4).

O God, forgive my inconsistencies and derelictions. Forgive me wherein I have been the occasion of slurs cast on Thy Son's religion, when the slurs should have been cast on *me*.

O FOR a holier walk with God,
A heart from all pollution free !
Expel, O Lord, each sinful thought,
And fill my soul with love to Thee.
Lord, send Thy Spirit from above
With light and truth and power divine,
And by His all-constraining grace,
Make me and keep me ever Thine.

August 24th.

DO I consider the blessed results of keeping out of the company of the ungodly, and not walking in their ways?—

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.—Ps. i. 1-3.

THROUGHOUT the world of nature we see lines of demarcation between flowers, trees, beasts, birds, creeping things, and insects. None overlap, or mix up one with the other. Each has its own seed in itself, and propagates itself, as though there was none other in existence. The lion and the sheep, the wolf and the lamb, the dove and the eagle, the robin and the hawk are all creatures in the same world, but keep apart from one another.

So it is in the kingdom of God's dear Son. Like garlic and wheat in the same field, or weeds and flowers in the same garden, the good and bad fish in the same ocean, the righteous and wicked, the holy and unholy, the believers and unbelievers, may live together in the same family, neighbourhood, and society; but they are as far asunder as good and evil, as light and darkness, as purity and vice. Though they may work together in the same field, travel together in the same vehicle, meet together on business transactions in one office, yet in spiritual realities, they move in opposite spheres, and are governed by dissimilar laws. As oil and water will not blend, as red and blue are not the same colour, so the righteous and wicked are unlike in nature and character.

As a godly man, I would feel how blessed it is, not to "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor to stand in the way of sinners, nor to sit in the seat of the scornful." I did not always feel so. At one time my delight was in the company of unbelievers. Blessed be God for changing my nature, and making such a difference between me and them. Only He has done it, as only He can turn a lion into a lamb. Now they may call, but I heed them not. I am no longer of their kind. They go their way, I go mine, according to the spirit of the new life within me.

Gracious God, grant me Thy help, that I may always realise the blessedness of not walking in the way of sinners.

SHUN evil companions, bad language disdain,
God's name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain.
Be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true;
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

August 25th.

IN being persecuted for Christ's sake, do I show the same spirit of endurance which He showed under similar circumstances?—

Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. —1 Pet. ii. 19-23.

IT is said that when Alexander the Great marched through Persia, his way was stopped with ice and snow, so that his soldiers gave up hope of going any farther; which he knowing, dismounted his horse, and went on foot through his soldiers, and set to with pickaxe to cut his way through, which as soon as his soldiers saw, themselves set to and followed his example.

In like manner I would be a follower of Jesus in His conflict with the powers and principalities of evil; in His endurance of the contradiction of sinners against Himself; in His striving against sin, even unto blood; in His not reviling when He was reviled; in His meekness and patience when called by evil names, when spat upon and buffeted; in His suffering for others, and in every other notable feature of His life.

What a sublime example He has left me! Prophets, apostles, and martyrs have shown great patience and long-suffering, but nothing to what He has. Besides, theirs' is an imitation of His so far as it goes. He inspired their breasts; He gave them courage to face their sufferings for His Name's sake.

"Christ upon the cross," says Trapp, "is a Doctor in his chair, where He reads unto us all a lecture of patience. It is said that when Hierome had finished reading the life of Hilarion, he shut the book and said, 'Hilarion shall be the champion I will follow.'"

But I will look to Jesus for my Pattern to follow in times of persecution from the world for His Name's sake. Like Him I will endeavour to be patient and meek. When reviled I will not revile again. When accounted as the "off-scouring of all things" for Him, I will take it as an honour, and glory in it. If the servant is as his Lord, how can he complain?

Blessed Jesus, I will not complain, but rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer for Thee.

HOW shall I follow Him I serve?
How shall I copy Him I love?
Nor from those blessed footsteps swerve,
Which lead me to His throne above?

August 26th.

AM I in any way a partaker of other men's sins?—

Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on his nakedness.—Hab. ii. 15.

Neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure.—1 Tim. v. 22.

THE connections, relations, and mutual dependencies, existing in human societies, make the probability of partaking of other men's sins next to a certainty. As there is no independent individual, so, in a sense, there is no independent sin. Sin thrives most in society. It is a solemn truth,—partaking of other men's sins.

This may be done by intention, arrangement, design, publicly, unblushingly. Or, it may be done by connivance, approval, innuendo, assent, consent, silence, sympathy.

If I tempt another to sin; or, if he sin from my example; or, if he sin ignorantly and I, knowing he has sinned, do not reprove him and instruct him; or, if I see one going to sin, and do not warn him; or, if I join hand in hand with one that I know is intending to sin; or, if I try to cover the sin of one that has sinned—I am a partaker of his sin. If I wish God-speed to one that is false in his belief, and is in any way propagating anti-Christian doctrine, or teaching precepts or principles that lead to living contrary to Christ and His Religion, I am a partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 11).

Alas, in how many instances have I been a partaker of other men's sins? If I seriously reflect, should I not find that in times without number I have done so. This is a point in Christian life that I have not sufficiently thought of. I have looked too much at the isolation of individual life, and not enough at its mutual relationships. No man liveth to himself: no man sinneth by himself. Surely it is sufficient that I bear the burden of my personal sins without joining hand in hand to share in the sins of others. I will by Divine grace keep myself pure, and not defile my garments by contact with, or participation in the evil deeds of my neighbours.

O God of purity, hold me back from every form of participation in other men's sins. By Thy grace may I avoid the appearance of evil, even in this.

O GOD, may I from every sin
Of other men be free,
And fully sanctified within,
Approve myself to Thee.

August 27th.

IN the absence of this world's smiles, am I satisfied, with the favour of God within me, and the glory of eternity before me?—

There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."—Ps. iv. 6-8.

The fear of the Lord is His treasure.—Isa. xxxiii. 6.

THE riches of this world are fictitious and artificial in comparison with the riches of heavenly wisdom. The smiles of this world are as a flickering lamp to the light of the Divine countenance. All that this world has to give is "vanity of vanities." It feeds not the hungry soul, nor quenches the thirsty spirit. Hence the sons of men are continually crying out, "Who will show us any good?" Whatever good is shown them and received by them, the cry is still made.

"God gives to some men," says Gurnall, "*bona scabelli*, great estates, abundance of corn and wine, and oil; the comforts of the creature, yet in so doing He entertains them so to speak but in a common cellar, they have none but carnal enjoyments; but for His people, they have the *bona throni*, His right hand blessings; He bestows His grace on them, beautifies them with holiness, makes them to drink of the rivers of His pleasures, and means to set them by Him at His table, with Himself in heavenly glory."

Let me, then, have the riches of grace, which are unsearchable and everlasting, before the riches of earth, that are shallow and fleeting; the smiles of God, which are real, before the smiles of man, that are seeming; the protection of almighty love, which is comforting, before that of an arm of flesh, which gives way when most needed; the gladness of sin forgiven, before the empty hilarious joys of the pleasures of sense; the bright foregleamings of everlasting bliss rather than the anticipations of worldly indulgences.

Grant me these things, O Lord, then I ask not, "Who will show me any good?" I have it. I am satisfied. I lay me down under the light of Thy countenance, in peace and safety. I am happier than those whose corn and wine are increased. "Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

LIFT up Thy countenance serene, and let Thy happy child Behold without a cloud between the Godhead reconciled. Then shall my happiness be more than that which worldlings gain From every increase to their store, without much loss or pain.

August 28th.

IF I do not patiently endure the ordinary trials of life, how shall I endure the extraordinary?—

If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee; then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan.—Jer. xii. 5.

IT is said that Bilney, a holy martyr in Queen Mary's days, tried his finger by himself in the candle before he tried his whole body in the fire at the stake. If he could not have stood the burning of his finger, how could he have endured the burning of his whole body?

If my faith will not abide my personal testing, how will it abide the testing of my enemies? If my love waxes cold with the ordinary means to keep it warm, what would become of it were the means altogether withdrawn? If a little persecution for Christ now weighs heavy upon me, how would it be with me if the days of papal trials were to come again? If the loss of a few pounds so affects me, what should I do if I lost all? If the death of one child is such a sorrow, what would the death of all be to me, as in the case of Job?

It is well for me to ask such questions, and so bring myself to the tribunal of trial. However many or heavy my troubles may now be, it is possible that heavier may come. If with patience I can bear what I now have, that will help me to bear heavier ones in case they should come. If I can run with the footmen without being wearied, I may be able to contend with horses. And if in the land of peace wherein I trusted, I was not weary, in all probability, when I come to the swellings of Jordan, I shall find no difficulty in contending with them.

"Our life," says Mathew Henry, "is a race, a warfare; we are in danger of being *run down*. It is God's usual method to begin with lesser trials, it is our wisdom to expect greater than any we have yet met with. We may be called out to *contend with horsemen*, and the sons of Anak may perhaps be reserved for the last encounter. In order to prepare ourselves for *greater* trials, let us courageously face the lesser, keep up our spirits, keep hold of the promise, keep in our way, with our eye on the prize; so run that we may obtain it."

IF in the smaller ills of life my spirit yields to fear,
What shall I do in that last strife, which brings the judgment near?
O Lord, on me Thy strength bestow in every trying hour,
That in death's struggles I may show Thy all victorious power.

August 29th.

DO I ask God for grace to keep me from grieving or quenching the influences of the Holy Spirit within me?—

They rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit; therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.—Isa. lxiii. 10.

Quench not the Spirit.—1 Thes. v. 19.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.—Eph. iv. 30.

Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.—2 Tim. i. 6.

THE Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent to enlighten, convince, comfort, guide, teach, and sanctify man in the kingdom of God. There is no experimental knowledge of God, or of Christ, or of the way of salvation, apart from Him. If there is no Holy Spirit there is no access to or enjoyment of any of the blessings of the new covenant. All Christ's religion is dead without His Spirit, and can be of no more practical use than a dead body.

Then how important that I should not "quench," or "grieve," or "vex" this Holy Spirit. If as *fire*, I quench Him by the dust of worldliness or the cold waters of indifference, where shall I find any one that can take His place? If as *light* I quench Him by shutting up my heart and mind against His reception, can I find any other light in reason, in philosophy, in myself, clearer and better than He? If as a *friend*, I grieve Him, where can I look for one that will or can take His place? If as a *guide*, I dismiss Him, is there any minister, book, or teacher that is more reliable? If as a *comforter* I close my heart to His consolations, who is there that can more suitably administer to my sorrows and help me on in the darkness and tribulations of this mortal life?

Verily, if I am without the Spirit I am an orphan indeed, comfortless, desolate, hopeless.

He who has in his possession a document of great value, made so by being *sealed* by legal authority, is careful of it. How much more should I be watchful lest I grieve that Spirit by Whom I am sealed as one of the children of God! I should suffer no thought, emotion, affection, or belief, to dwell in me contrary to His influences. I should live in perfect harmony with His will.

Blessed Spirit! Thou knowest my weaknesses; have mercy upon me. Strengthen me, that I may never grieve Thee so as to drive Thee from my heart!

HOLY Spirit, keep with me, though unfaithful I have been,
In Thy light still may I see what is duty, what is sin;
Guide me all my journey through; teach me all my Saviour's will
With Thine influence imbue, lead me on to Zion's hill.

August 30th.

I *MAY have other days given me in which to improve upon what I do to-day; but do I remember that I shall have only one day in which to die, and no subsequent opportunity to improve upon that?—*

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.—
Heb. ix. 27.

A time to be born, and a time to die.—Ecc. iii. 2.

If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.—Ecc. xi. 3.

AS there is only one day of birth, so there is only one day of death. We came into the world when we were prepared for it, we go out whether we are prepared or no. There is no discharge in that war, when it comes. If we are equipped and can conquer, well; if we are not, and the “king of terrors” conquer us, so much the worse.

As I know there is only one day in which I can die, and no amends can be made afterwards upon my failure on that day, I shall be wise to prepare for it while I have many days at my disposal. That day may come without a warning, and leave me not a moment to consider, or to reflect, or to prepare. But if I am ready, as one who is about to take a journey, all I shall have to do will be to go when the moment arrives. While I have the light, I must walk in the light. While the truth, the grace, the Spirit of Christ are with me, I must diligently use them in the refinement of my heart and life. While the “wedding garment” is at my disposal, I must put it on. While I have time, I must go and buy oil for my vessel, so that when that day shall come I shall be fully ready to enter in with my Lord to the marriage.

If I live well—“a life of faith upon the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me”—I need have no fear of death or of what shall follow. A holy life in time flows on its course, like a river, into a holy life in eternity. It will not matter what key opens the gate of my prison; my escape will be a happy one. It may be by fire or water, by fever or decline, by violence or peace. I shall find the gate into heaven already open to take me in! To die will be gain. Absent from the body, present with the Lord!

O Thou Lord of life and Conqueror of death, do Thou in life make me victor of death.

WEEP not, my friends! rather rejoice with me!

I shall not feel the pain, but shall be gone,
And you will have another friend in heaven.

Then start not at the creaking of the door

Through which I pass! I see what is beyond it!

August 31st.

DO I understand that the real religion of Jesus Christ, like life, is within me, and not in any thing external?—

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—Rom. xiv. 17.

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.—1 Cor. iv. 20.

The kingdom of God is within you.”—Luke xvii. 21.

We . . . worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.—Phil. iii. 3.

SOME Christians seem to act on the principle that the religion of Jesus is in outward things, such as conformity to the varied rites, ceremonies, canons, or ordinances of their church.

This they may have learned of men, but I have not so learned of Christ. The life of a tree is in the sap circulating silently and invisibly through every part. The life of a man is in his blood flowing and permeating every member of his body. So is life in everything that has life.

Thus have I learned of Christ, and of my experience (the best of teachers), the religion of the Christ to be. It is *within me*; then it is not in creeds, feasts, fasts, rites, priests, *sacraments*, or in anything else of a human or earthly origin. It is within me a sovereign power, guiding and governing me in all things. It is within me as life, pervading my affections and faculties, giving character to my principles, my motives, my desires, my thoughts, works, and ways. It is a blessed reality which I *feel*, am conscious of, enjoy, which is inseparable from me, and no one can take from me; which I sleep with, wake with, work with, rest with, suffer with, die with, go to heaven with. It is that which, when I can pray no more, read no more, go to church no more, and every form shall fall from me, and I shall be alone in the valley of death, and alone pass into the abyss of eternity, will abide as an incorruptible, everlasting life of purity, peace and joy, in the consciousness of my immortal being.

O God, do be pleased to grant that my religion may be such. Do give me *life* in my soul. I am sick of mere forms and shows. Do give me to *feel* as well as to believe, that Thy grace reigns in me through righteousness unto eternal life. Then shall I “worship Thee in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

Religion pure,
Unchanged in spirit, though to forms and codes
Wear myriad modes,
Contains all creeds within its mighty span—
The love of God, displayed in love of man.

Free from Care.

O LORD, how happy should we be
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest ;
And feel at heart that One above
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best !

How far from this our daily life,
How oft disturbed by anxious strife,
By sudden wild alarms :
Oh, could we but relinquish all
Our earthly props, and simply fall
On Thine almighty arms !

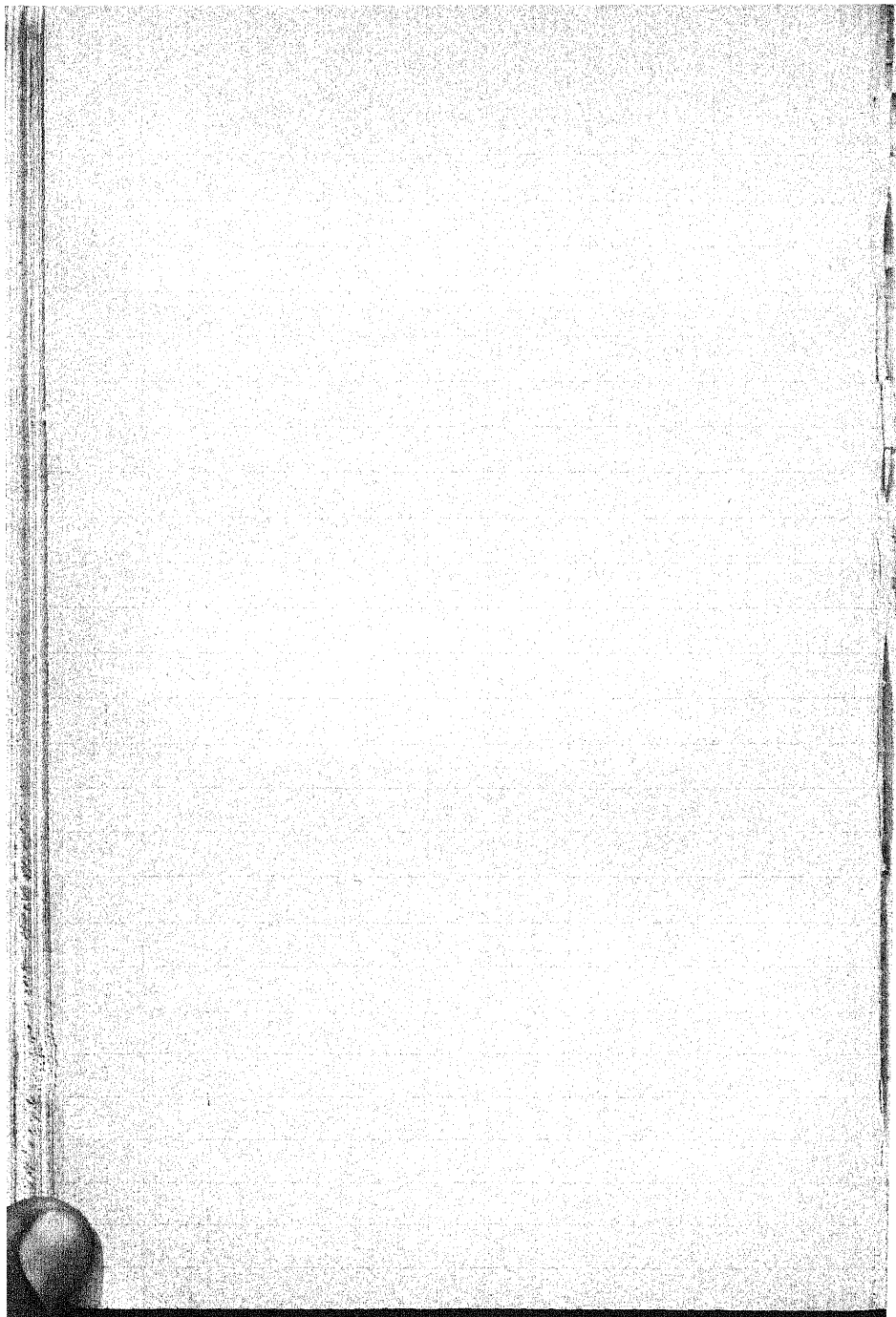
Could we but kneel and cast our load,
Even while we pray, upon our God,
Then rise with lightened cheer ;
Sure that the Father, who is nigh
To still the famished raven's cry,
Will hear in that we fear.

We cannot trust Him as we should ;
So chafes weak nature's restless mood
To cast its peace away ;
But birds and flowerets round us preach,
All, all the present evil teach
Sufficient for the day.

Lord, make these faithless hearts of ours
Such lessons learn from birds and flowers ;
Make them from self to cease,
Leave all things to a Father's will,
And taste, before Him lying still,
E'en in affliction, peace.

J. Anstice.

Memoranda.



September 1st.

IS it not a blessed privilege that Jesus gives me to exchange my emptiness for His fullness?—

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.—Rev. iii. 17, 18.

WHO is to be so much pitied as one that says of himself, "I am rich; I am a king; I am clad in royal robes; I have need of nothing"? Yet, in fact, he is poor, blind, naked, and demented?

Pitiable as such a man might be in common society, *he* is still more pitiable who is like him in the kingdom of God.

Am *I* in any way like him? Does my self-righteousness blind me to a just perception of what I really am? Do I, in its false light, see myself as good, holy, wise, and not as other men? a moral king in my own might and right? having no need of anything from Christ? being my own saviour? commanding all resources of good in myself, and not dependent upon God for my holiness and heaven?

Such was the *natural* view I had of myself. But God, who was rich in mercy towards me, opened my eyes, brought me to my right mind, and showed me that I was "poor, and blind, and naked." Blessed be His name! He did not leave me in that view of myself. He called my mind from myself, or I should have died in abject despair. He spoke to me in tender love, and offered me His riches of grace for my poverty of sin, His garment of righteousness for my rags of defilement, His glory for my shame, His happiness for my misery. I made the exchange; and now I am clothed and in my right mind, a true heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ.

Had I not made this exchange, what more would have been needed to have shewn my folly?

What sovereign grace in Thee, O Lord, to deal with me in such ways of munificence! Blessed be Thy name for ever and for ever!

O MIGHT I my own works forsake,
Myself and all I have deny;
Thy condescending counsel take,
And come to Thee pure gold to buy!
O might I through Thy grace attain
The faith Thou never wilt reprove,
The faith that purges every stain,
The faith that always works by love!

September 2nd.

ALTHOUGH I cannot see my Heavenly Father as He accompanies me through life, do I enjoy a consciousness of His abiding presence with me?—

I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee.—Isa. xli. 13.

Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.—Ps. lxxiii. 23, 24.

No man hath seen God at any time.—John iv. 12.

A CHILD left alone in a lonely road at night, cries in fear of something, he knows not what, excepting the darkness. Give him a light, and his fear vanishes. But if his father is with him, though he see him not, the darkness has little effect upon him.

Thus, being alone in the darkness of this world, I fear to walk along its dangerous ways. I have a dread of something which, though I see it not, seems to beset me on every hand. But if my faith can realize the fact that my heavenly Father is with me, *I will fear no evil.*

Though I see Him not, I hear His voice; I feel the influence of His indwelling grace; the loving grip of His hand, the surrounding of His gracious presence. He comes between me and any unseen terrible Power that would destroy me. He feeds me, clothes me, lifts me up when I fall, holds me back from wandering, seeks me when I am lost, cheers me when discouraged, and gives me strength to keep on my way.

Though I see Him not, I have as satisfactory proofs that He is with me as if I had Israel's Pillar of fire by night and Cloud of glory by day to accompany me; as I have of my own consciousness, which I have never seen.

Not to believe my Father's presence with me as I walk through life, would enshroud me in darkness, and give me a sense of jeopardy every hour. It would, indeed, make life a "great and terrible wilderness, with fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought," without a Moses or Joshua to lead me through and bring me safely to the promised land.

I rejoice in my Father's presence, though I see Him not, as a blind child would in the presence of its father in a lonely way. I shall behold Him, but not now. When the darkness has past, and the full light appears, I shall "see Him as He is."

ON earth Thou hidest, not to scare
Thy children with Thy Light;
Thou showest us Thy face in heaven,
When we can bear the sight.

September 3rd.

AM I thankful that my sense of acceptance with God and enjoyment of His love, do not depend on my intellectual attainments?—

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight.—Matt. xi. 25, 26.

Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.—1 Cor. i. 26.

THE love of a father towards his child does not rest on its education or mental capacity, or on its birth as a plebeian or as a prince. This love is of nature to nature. Hence a poor parent loves his child as much as a rich man loves his.

It is even so with God. Education, position, circumstances have no influence with Him in His conduct towards His children. "A wayfaring man, though a fool," is as precious to Him as one of royal blood, or one that has attained the highest scholastic accomplishments. It always has been, and is, an artifice of Satan to overshadow the life of religion by the power of intellect.

There was a poor Highland woman who could neither read nor write, but could observe how the frail petals of the flax or lint-bell unfolded in the sun and closed when his light was withdrawn. Though very ignorant, she had obtained a knowledge of her Saviour. She applied to her minister to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. He examined her and found that she knew so little of the doctrines of the Church as to unfit her to be a communicant. He conveyed this to her as kindly as he could, when she replied, "Aweel, sir, aweel; but I ken ae thing; as the lint-bell opens to the sun, so does my heart to the Lord Jesus."

So long as my *heart* opens to the Lord Jesus, that is all *He* requires. The customs of human societies may require other things of me which, if I can meet, it may be well for me to do so; but the one question He asks preparatory to acceptance with Him and entrance into His kingdom, is, "Lovest thou Me?" If Jesus see my heart opening to Him in love, He will come in, no matter what sort of a heart it is, or what are my intellectual and social associations.

I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that though Thou art the King of Glory, Thou art the King of Grace, and as such, Thou comest into this poor heart of mine, which is open to receive Thee!

POOR outcasts of men, Whose souls were despised,
And left with disdain, By Jesus are prized;
His gracious creation, In us He makes known,
And brings us salvation, And calls us His own!

IS my moral life in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ?—

Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.—Matt. vii. 24, 25.

THE Apostle Paul says to Timothy, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying." 1 Tim. i. 4. "Refuse profane and old wives' fables." 1 Tim. iv. 7. "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." Tim. i. 14. These words of sound wisdom to a young minister of the Gospel, are applicable to every Christian. The things referred to in them are "hay, straw, chaff and stubble," which, if I heed and believe, will yield no more strength to my spiritual life than they would to my natural life. "What is the chaff to wheat? saith the Lord."

How different are "these sayings of Mine," contained in His Sermon on the Mount, and His other sayings recorded in the Gospels. If I hear and do these "sayings of Mine," that is, if I am meek, pure, humble, self-renouncing, honest, sincere in prayer, conscientious in convictions, renounce the hypocritical, the Pharisaical, the false; seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; lay up treasures in heaven; not anxious about what I shall eat, or drink, or wear; take no anxious thought of to-morrow; love my enemies; do good to them that hate me and despitefully use me; and be perfect as my Father which is in heaven is perfect—I am a "wise man."

"These sayings of Mine," constitute a "Rock," which no wisdom or powers of men or demons can shake. They are as much of God as are the laws that govern the material world. They are the laws of the kingdom of heaven on earth. If I keep "these sayings" I build my life on that Rock. I am a true man, as a tree is, growing according to nature's laws. I need fear no danger from the judgments of men or the judgments of God. I can lift up my head above all my enemies round about me with the sublime meekness and strength of the Son of God.

O Thou "Teacher sent from God," Who didst speak as never man spake, do Thou vouchsafe to me Thy Spirit to help me to keep these sayings of Thine.

HOW wise these sayings, Lord, of Thine, above all human thought, Beyond what earthly schools can give, or precious gold has bought. He, who these sayings shall observe, a character attains Without a blemish or a spot, or any moral stains.

September 5th.

DO I think for my comfort in hours of sorrow that my heavenly Father never forgets me?—

Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.—Isa. xlix. 15, 16.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil.—Jer. xxix. 11.

IT is not difficult to conceive of such a state of feeling between two parties, that to forget one another would be their greatest desire. On the other hand, one can easily call to mind an instance wherein to remember one another was the highest pleasure, and if one thought the other had forgotten him it would be an occasion of deepest grief.

Thus it is as between God and His people. They do not forget one another. His people speak of the glorious honour of His majesty, and of His wondrous works. They abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness, and sing of His righteousness. They speak of the glory of His kingdom, and talk of His power. (Ps. cxlv).

But it sometimes occurs that because a believer does not so graciously realise the Divine presence as is his wont or desire, he doubts whether or no He thinks of him at all for good. In fear and trembling he inquires, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Where is my God in His loving remembrance of me, as in days gone by? Where the comforts of His grace? Where the soothing of His love? Has He left me alone in my weaknesses, sorrows and sufferings?"

To these questions of doubts and fears the Divine Father responds, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." It is as though God said, "See, my child, for thyself, how thou art graven in likeness and name on My hands! How is it possible for Me to forget thee? I cannot forget thee. Thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine."

My Father, forgive my doubts, and help me to trust Thy more than motherly remembrance of me, and affection for me!

CAN a woman's tender care cease towards the child she bare?

Yes, she may forgetful be; yet will I remember thee.

Mine is an unchanging love, higher than the heights above;

Deeper than the depths beneath; free and faithful, strong as death.

September 6th.

DOES not the Bible teach me to be industrious in that sphere of labour to which I am appointed in the providence of God?—

Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.—Eph. iv. 28.

When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.—2 Thes. iii. 10.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.—Prov. xxii. 29.

THE Bible is a Book for both worlds. It enjoins work as well as prayer. It teaches men how to live in time, and how they will live in eternity. One thing it teaches as regards this life is *industry* in honest occupation. All things are made to work, each in its own sphere, as of the ability given by its Creator.

While, as an inhabitant of earth, I fill my place, I must do so without encroaching upon the place of another, as each star keeps its own orbit, each tree its own rooting, each bird its own plumage and instinct. Nor must I fulfil my earthly duties in such ways as to interfere with my spiritual and eternal obligations. While I do the one I must not leave the other undone. Neither must I reverse the order in which God has placed them. The kingdom of God and His righteousness must be first; "these things" of earth secondary. I must walk morally as I do physically, feet on earth, head up toward heaven. If, like Martha I serve, but without being cumbered, like Mary, I must find time to sit at the Master's feet, and hear His words. If, as David, I serve my day and generation, according to the will of God, like him I shall at last fall on sleep and be gathered to my fathers. The "well-done" of the Master must cover the whole circle of my earthly life.

Blessed Jesus, Who when on earth didst work as a carpenter, give me Thy Spirit that even in my daily toils I may be a follower of Thee in industry, punctuality, faithfulness, meekness, and love. May I never be ashamed of my work, however lowly it be. May I make it honourable in honesty, in trueness, in fidelity. May I follow it as under Thine eye, and rather than it being a hindrance to Thy grace, may it under Thy guidance be a helpmeet to my highest work—that of my personal salvation.

FELLOW-WORKERS are we; hour by hour
Human tools are shaping Heaven's great schemes,
Till we see no limit to man's powers,
And reality outstrips old dreams.

September 7th.

AFTER all my secret falls and heart-backslidings before God, will He be gracious unto me, if I return unto Him?—

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you. I will heal your backslidings.—Jer. iii. 14, 22.

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.—Hosea xiv. 4.

For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.—Jer. xxx. 17.

HOW sad that I ever should backslide from a Father of such love, tenderness, and care! Had He been thoughtless of me, or cruel towards me, I might have had some excuse; but I have none. It is my own perverse nature which has done it!

Is there hope for me if I return? Hope, of course there is, my soul. Only come at His invitation, and He will heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely. He will not only receive thee, but *heal* thee. If thou *repent*, God will *cure*. Turn from thy evil, and He will separate thy evil from thee. It is not thy tears that can wash away thy sins, but the blood of the Lamb.

"I will take with me words and turn to the Lord, and will say unto Him, Take away all mine iniquity, and receive me graciously, so will I render the calves of my lips" (Hosea xiv. 2). "He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake" (Ps. xxiii. 3).

"I was weary," says Christmas Evans, "of a cold heart towards Christ, and His sacrifice, and the work of His Spirit—of a cold heart in the pulpit, in secret prayer, and in study. On a day ever to be remembered by me, as I was going from Dolgelly to Machynlleth, and climbing up towards Cadair Idris, I considered it to be incumbent upon me to pray, however hard I felt my heart, and however worldly the frame of my spirit was. Having begun in the name of Jesus, I soon felt as it were the fetters loosening, and the old hardness of heart softening, and, as I thought, mountains of frost and snow dissolving and melting within me. This engendered confidence in my soul in the promise of the Holy Ghost. I felt my mind relieved from some great bondage: tears flowed copiously, and I was constrained to cry out for the gracious visits of God, by restoring to my soul the joy of His salvation."

O how ready the Father is to receive the returning prodigal! And, O, the rapturous bliss of the prodigal when he again receives the tokens of his Father's love and favour!

MAN-LIKE is it to fall into sin,
Fiend-like is it to dwell therein,
Christ-like is it for sin to grieve,
God-like is it all sin to leave.

September 8th.

DO I possess in myself an experimental knowledge that the Bible is the Word of God?—

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts.—Ps. cxix. 99, 100.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.—Ps. cxi. 10.

If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.—John vii. 17.

I HAVE seen a volume of medical receipts for almost all the ills that the body is heir to; at the end of most of these receipts there was the word "*tried*." I have read of a Bible which belonged to an aged Christian, in which was written, "I hereby set my seal to the truth of every promise contained in this book, having found them all realized throughout a long life in my happy experience."

The most effectual way of knowing whether anything is true is to *try* it. I may hear the arguments by which a scientist proves that honey is sweet and gall is bitter; but to *taste* them is the shortest and most satisfactory way. Taste is of nature, and more trustworthy than logic; so *experience* in religion is of religion, and more to be relied upon than theory. The word of God is in my hands: one man comes and by his skill or folly endeavours to prove to me that it is *false*. Another man comes and by his wisdom and learning adduces evidence to prove it is *true*. Now the Bible cannot be both false and true, which then of these two am I to be guided by in my belief?

I say of both, "I have that which proves the Bible to be true to me, which the former cannot destroy, and the latter exceed. I have the evidence of *experience*. I have for years read it, meditated upon it, and endeavoured to live by it; and during those years I have found it to be what it claims to be—the word of the Lord.

You might as well tell a child that sugar is not sweet, or a hungry man that food is not pleasant, as to tell me that the Bible is not the book of God. I have *tasted* the good word of God, and it is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. I have *tried* it, and it is more to be desired than gold or much fine gold.

Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Thy word; and I thank Thee for Thy Spirit, Who has applied it to my heart, and given me the experimental evidence of its truthfulness.

LAMP of my feet, whereby I trace my path when wont to stray;
Stream from the fount of heavenly grace, brook by the traveller's way:
Bread of my soul, whereon I feed, true manna from on high,
My guide and chart, wherein I read of realms beyond the sky.

September 9th.

WHILE *I am deeply sensible of the natural evil of my heart, am I also awake to the fact that I have no power apart from Divine grace to make it better?—*

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.—Job xiv. 3.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.—Jer. xiii. 23.

THERE are few men who feel the evils of their own hearts that do not deplore them, and at one time or other endeavour to allay them. But though they may *allay* them, they cannot *destroy* them. They may curtail *some* of the smaller evils, and stop the *outflow* of some of the greater into their walks of life; but alas, are they not at last compelled to acknowledge that the evils are too deep, intricate, and subtle for their mastery. They struggle against them long and hard, until they give up in despair, and say, "It is no use, we cannot cure them." They are like a man who finds that the insanitary condition of his house is such as defies all his skill and power to find a remedy; or like a man diseased in his body, who may alleviate himself a little now and again, but cannot touch the radical cause of the disease.

It is this giving up in despair and not knowing, or if knowing, not going to the only Physician Who can cure them, that leads so many to yield to the inward degeneracy of their hearts without restraint, which, after a while, develops in one and then another of moral deformities, until the life, like the heart itself is "only evil, and that continually."

I will cease trying to heal *my* heart by my own power. I am sick of it. If I think one day I have cured one evil, the next day shows me another evil has arisen; and perhaps the very one I thought I cured yesterday will spring up again to-morrow. I will have done with it. I will go to Him Who knows my heart better than I know it, Who reads it, searches it, sees its germs of evil. He has said He will give me a *new* heart. That is just what I want. Nothing less will suffice.

O Thou Divine Physician! undertake for me, and do as Thou hast promised!

I MAKE me cords to hold from wrong,
And bind my will by purpose strong,
But my resolves, as cords of tow,
Before the strength of passion go,
Like hempen bands, which flames o'errun,
Or icy streams before the sun. . . .
Lord, Who has ta'en me by the hand,
'Tis only by Thy strength I stand.

September 10th.

WHILE I meditate in adoring wonder on the love of God to this fallen world in general, do I specially meditate with grateful emotions on the love of God to me in particular?—

Who loved me and gave Himself FOR ME.—Gal. ii. 20.

I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.—Jer. xxxi. 3.

GOD, in His *general* love to mankind, is like a king who rides in his chariot through the streets of a great city, and scatters money broadcast among the gazing multitudes, to be caught or picked up by any that can do so. God in His *particular* love is like that same king going to the house of one of his poor subjects, and as he enters saying, "I have heard of your great distress, and have come to bring you relief," and places two or three gold coins in his hand.

"It is not philanthropy merely," says one, "which God has shown in the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, but a *distinguishing love of individual souls*. The two sentiments are wholly distinct. Philanthropy is like the moonlight, exceedingly beautiful, when thrown in a silver flood over the landscape, but too cold to quicken life in nature, or to bring out the blossom and perfume of flowers. But distinguishing personal love is like the sun's ray, genial and warm. It strikes deep into the heart of him on whom it fastens, and quickens that heart into lively emotions of gratitude and praise."

I know God has loved me as one of the race in the former sense, and I have received manifold tokens of His kingly bounty; but I know that He has loved me in the latter view also. When I was dead in trespasses and in sins, He came and quickened me ; when I was lying in my blood, wounded and bruised, He came and healed me ; when I had nothing, and was nigh perishing, He came and placed at my disposal the unsearchable riches of His grace. The love of God to the world was a love of beneficence ; the love of God to *me*, as one of His children, is the love of *complaisance*. My love to Him is the love of affection, trust, and obedience. I rejoice in His love. I am happy in His love. It is my stronghold of strength and security in Him.

For this love, O my God, my whole being ought to be a grateful sacrifice to Thee.

I AM so glad that my Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the book He has given ;
Wonderful things in the Bible I see ;
This is the dearest, that Father loves *me*.

September 11th.

DO I not frequently hear the word of God so indifferently as soon after to forget all about it?—

Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—Jas. i. 21-25.

HOW is it that my memory is so good to remember my business and social engagements, but not to remember the word of God, *which I read or hear*?

This is not as it should be. I am afraid there is something wrong in *me* more than in the memory. Is it that I feel more interest in the things I remember than in those I forget? Do I hear the word indifferently, thoughtlessly, as a matter of course, with a mind wandering into the world, as though the word did not concern me? or as though it was an old story from which there is nothing new to be learned? Are my excuses for not hearing the word sometimes anything more than subterfuges?

If such are the facts, is it any wonder that I should so soon forget the word after I have heard it? My *heart* is not in my hearing, as it is in the other things. I have done with it when the hearing, or pretence to hearing, is over. But the word has not done with me until it has judged me at the last day. How often do I slight the word because of the “*earthen vessel*” in which it is brought? Do I not too frequently go to hear the *preacher* rather than the message from God? How often the word has failed to profit me because I have not heard it in faith and prayer?

“Are you going to hear Mr. Wesley preach?” a certain gentleman, who was fond of his preaching, was once asked. “No,” he replied, “I am going to hear the word of the Lord.” It is in this spirit I will endeavour henceforth to hear the Gospel; hear the voice that speaks from heaven; “give the more earnest heed to the things that I hear, lest at any time I let them slip.”

O Lord, circumsise my ears that I may hear Thy word to profit, and help me not to be a *forgetful* hearer of it, but a doer of the same.

WITH praying heart and thoughtful mind, O may I hear Thy word,
And in it stores of wisdom find, and comfort from my Lord,
Its treasures may I hide within the memories of my heart;
So use them that I shall not sin, or from Thy paths depart.

September 12th.

HAVE I a just conception of what prayer is, as taught by Jesus Christ, and do I endeavour to pray accordingly?—

When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father, etc.—Matt. vi. 7-9.

PRAYER does not move God as an orator moves a congregation, but as a child his father. When we use vain repetitions in prayer, we are like the heathen in our conception of God : we think of Him as a Being, influenced by many and long words of adulation and flattery : all of which are vanity and mockery to Him. True prayer is speaking to God as "our Father"; implying simplicity, sincerity, confidence, love, and obedience.

My God is my *Father*. He knows my wants in such a way that they are ever present to Him ; full in the review and contemplation of His infinite mind. He understands at a glance their number, nature, and urgency. My prayer is not to *inform* Him ; nor is it to call His attention to them, for He cannot be distracted, as a finite mind, by other persons and things. There is, therefore, no need in private prayer for loud or vehement utterances, nor in social or public, beyond what is necessary to be heard by all present. God is not located in the highest heavens, to need our ascension thither to worship Him. Nor is He in the deepest depths to need our descent thither to pray with Him. He is nigh unto all who call upon Him. He is found of all them who seek Him. He is not exalted above the simple and lowly. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He hath ordained praise."

There is no necessity for *prolixity*, or great length, in my prayers, with the idea that it will influence God. Before I speak He knows what I am going to say. If my spirit in its desires and love touch Him in His love, wisdom, and fatherly care, I shall draw from Him, in a few words uttered or unexpressed, the things which He sees I need, as a child by the simple affiance it has in its parent.

O Thou that hearest prayer, teach me always *how* to pray, so that my prayers may be such as Thou wilt accept, and answer, according to Thy own good pleasure.

PRAYER is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try ;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

September 13th.

DO I only talk of perfect love to God, or have I attained its enjoyment, and do I show that I enjoy it in my spirit and conduct?—

Therein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?—1 John iv. 17, 18, 20.

This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.—1 John v. 3.

TALK in religion is very common, and therefore very cheap. Say well and do well are not always associates. They are, in fact, too frequently found living asunder. "If a man *say* he love God and *hate* his brother, he is a liar." Such are the words of John the Apostle, as regards one that *says* he does and does *not*.

If I have perfect love to God, whatsoever is of God and leads to God I shall love, for His name's sake. All things honest, pure, virtuous, good, useful, I shall pursue as pleasing to Him. There will be no limitation, no condition, no restraint, no period to my love. I shall love Him with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength, and my neighbour as myself. To "see God" with a pure heart in this tabernacle of flesh will be my heaven on earth, and fill me with bliss beyond utterance. If I desire anything that is earthly it will be that it may help me the more readily to realise His presence and love. I shall be a living sacrifice to Him, holy and acceptable. No creature will be allowed to share *with* Him my affection and trust. My soul will be so filled with Him that no wife, or husband, or child, or pleasure, or wealth, or friend, will find a co-equal presence with Him. The mind which was in Christ will be in me, so that every motion of my heart, every word of my tongue, every work of my hand, every pursuit of my life, will be in relation to Him, and in subjection to His will.

Do I only *say* this, or do I *live* it? If I say it, may it be in the *life*, not in the words. Words will not be needed if the life speak. I shall be a faithful witness for my Lord, and an earnest worker for His glory.

O Lord, may Thy *love* be in me such a principle of seraphic fire, as must perforce evince itself, in my social and public life. May I be perfect in love to God and to man!

PURE love to God. O may I find,
Pure love to every soul of man;
And in Thy sober, spotless mind,
Saviour, my heaven on earth I gain.

September 14th.

DO I serve the Lord in the whole circle of life with joyfulness and gladness of heart?—

Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things: Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies.—Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. . . . Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.—Ps. c. 1, 2, 4.

WHEN the sun “as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race,” scatters his benedictions over nature in spring-time and summer, it is astonishing how all things wake up into life, fruitfulness, beauty, and music.

“The whole creation joins in one
To bless the sacred Name.”

My God, the “Sun of Righteousness,” is ever shining on me, and pouring on my basket and store, my in-coming and my out-going, my up-rising and lying-down, the blessings of Nature and Grace. He supplies all my needs “out of the riches of His glory.” He withholds no “good thing.” He blesses me with “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

What acknowledgments do I make to Him? Do I respond in the emotions and obedience of love; in the beauty and fragrance of holiness; in the harmony and melody of spiritual joy; in the fruits of righteousness and praise? In a word, are all the powers of my being so permeated with His benign influences, as to join in His service “with joyfulness and with gladness of heart”? The “ever BLESSED God” seeks from me a service in unison with Himself; as a happy father, takes pleasure in the joys and delights of his children.

If I do not thus serve God, I do not serve *Him* at all, but I serve my enemies—my selfishness, my worldliness, my pride, whose only work is to undermine my happiness, and so destroy the harmony of my life with the will and nature Divine.

Thou, almighty and infinitely happy God, arise in the light of Thy countenance. Shine upon me. The wilderness and solitary place of my nature shall then be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly even with joy and singing (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2). So shall I serve Thee “with joyfulness and with gladness of heart.”

BE all my heart and all my days
Devoted to my Saviour's praise;
And let my glad obedience prove
How much I owe, how much I love.

September 15th.

DO I forget that it is through much tribulation I must go to heaven, as all God's children ; and that even Jesus, His well-beloved Son, was not an exception ?

We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.—Acts xiv. 22.

In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.—John xvi. 33.

Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.—1 Pet. iv. 13.

IF the Sovereign Lord Himself, and all His distinguished servants, passed through much tribulation in going to heaven, I must not think it strange that I have to pass the same way. Who, or what am I, that I should wish to go to heaven in "silver slippers" through an earthly paradise of delights, when all before me travelled barefooted, as it were, through a waste howling wilderness ?

My Master told me, when I engaged myself to Him, that in the world I should have trials and opposition, as one of His followers ; that if the world hated Him it would also hate me ; that though in the world I should have tribulation, in Him I should have peace.

One of the chief commanders in His army of faithful warriors, declares from his own experience, that if any one will live godly in CHRIST JESUS he must suffer persecution. I may live godly and have no persecution, but not in "Christ Jesus."

And another says, I am to rejoice in that I am permitted to be a partaker of like tribulation with my Lord, that "when His glory is revealed I may be glad with exceeding joy."

I find so far as this life goes, that no one attains eminence in honour or glory, as a warrior, a statesman, an explorer, or reformer, but through conflict of some kind or other. So it is, that to sit on the throne with my reigning Lord, I must follow Him in the regeneration, and fight the good fight of faith.

Then, I will take it, as a matter of course, that I cannot reach "glory, immortality, eternal life," otherwise than I have been told, or than my forerunners have done.

Suffice it, Lord ; for Thy dear Name I will carry the cross, endure the shame, and count it all joy to do so.

HE was a man of sorrows—He who loved and saved us thus ;
And shall the world that frowned on Him wear only smiles for us ?
No ! we must follow in the path our Lord and Saviour run ;
We must not find a resting place where He we love had none.

September 16th.

WHENCE come these tumults, unrest, and disquietudes of my soul?—

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members.—Jas. iv. 1.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.—Rom. vi. 12, 13.

THE various influences which permeate the atmosphere, to the injury of its inhabitants, in different ways, are not from the pure heavens and cloudless sunlight. They arise from the earth. So it is as to the moral disorders and spiritual diseases of my soul. They descend not from above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. They come from my own nature in its carnal and unsanctified condition.

Were our earth free from sin and corruption, there would be no pestilence, wars, sickness, or death on its surface, any more than there is in the dwelling places of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. So, if my nature were thoroughly sanctified from all its filthiness of flesh and spirit, and I was perfected in the holiness of God, I should have no doubts, fears, disordered appetites and passions. I should have no worldly thoughts, carnal affections, or sensual desires. I should live in an empyrean light, in a paradisaical atmosphere, in the enjoyment of perfect health and strength of soul, as do the glorified in the immediate presence of God. Washed in the blood of the Lamb, I should walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship with Him. I should exceed Adam in his unfallen state, in purity and in bliss!

Why am I not thus sanctified? Is not the reason in myself? The means and Agent to effect this are at my command. Alas! I want the will. There the fault lies. Do I not allow sin to reign in me, when it ought to be in subjection? Are not my members instruments of unrighteousness instead of instruments unto God? Am I not a slave to iniquity rather than a free-born servant of the Lord? O wretched man that I am! When shall I be delivered from this body of sin and death?

O God, make haste to help me! Make me willing to be clean! Constrain me by Thy all-powerful Spirit. Say unto my soul, I am Thy salvation!

LORD, my spirit clings to Thee, will not, dare not, let Thee go,
Till Thy grace has set me free from the sins that cause my woe;
By Thy dying I was bought, ransomed from the world and sin;
By the work that Thou hast wrought, Jesu, make me pure within.

September 17th.

DO I not sometimes find a tendency in me, as I look at others, to think myself better than they?—

And Jesus spake a parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. — Luke xix. 9.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.— Prov. xxx. 12.

Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose.—Isa. lxxv. 5.

NOTHING perhaps, shows the weakness and vanity of human nature, whether in a Christian or in an unbeliever, so much as thinking, because he has some excellence which another has not, he is better than he is, and so slights him. If perfection consisted in one virtue only, there might be some reason in this; but it does not. It is made up of many.

If I trust in myself that I am righteous, I trust in a bubble; yea, in a lie, and am condemned. That, of itself, makes me as bad or worse than the vilest sinner, who rejects himself before God and sues His mercy to forgive him.

If I am a Churchman and despise a Dissenter, a Dissenter may as consistently despise me because I am a Churchman? Where is the difference? There is no religion in either. Granted, that another man is worse than I am, he is my brother; and shall I despise my brother, my mother's son? To do so will not make me any better nor him any worse. We have one Father, and one Redeemer. God does not reject him, but loves him. Christ does not despise him; He died for him. Shall I take upon myself more than God? If I am better than my brother, it is all of divine grace. Instead of despising him I should pray for him, and thank God for His grace to me. I should show my betterness by endeavouring to make him better than I am. The Holy God sees nothing good in me, but what is of Himself. Were He to despise me, because He sees me to be so bad in myself and leave me to perish, it would be more terrible for me than for my brother cast off by me. Instead of casting me away, the one Father comes to me in my wretchedness, not as the Priest or the Levite, but as the good Samaritan, shows His compassion, and makes ample provision for my full restoration to health and purity.

May I go and do likewise with my brother!

DISDAIN thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not.

September 18th.

WHILST I appreciate my associations with the Church militant, how do I value my associations with the Church of the first-born in heaven?—

Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.—Heb. xii. 22-24.

I VALUE my fellowship and communion with the people of Christ in that section of His visible Church with which I am connected. Their love, sympathy, counsel, prayers and kindness, are great helps in the personal cultivation of my Christian life. But with all these, I cannot but observe, that as there is “no perfection under the sun,” so there is not in the Church on earth. Whilst I see myself to be so much wanting, I see my fellow-Christians to be partakers with me of the ordinary infirmities and failings of this mortal life.

This is the earth-ward and visible side of the Redeemer’s Church of which I am a member. The heaven-ward side, gives a brighter, purer, sublimer view. The members of this Church are only of one class—“the spirits of just men made perfect,” who have escaped life’s tribulations, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In these I see perfection which I see not in myself or in any of earth’s saints. Among these I see many whom I loved in the struggles of mortality, but they have escaped them all and are now faultless before the throne. I see their number continually augmented from the Church militant. O, how blessed, beyond words to say, is the comfort and encouragement derived from fellowship in spirit with the heavenly Church of the first-born!

O happy day, when free from the burden of the flesh, we shall be numbered in the congregation of glorified spirits before the throne! When with the saints on Mount Zion, we shall all be loving, as we are loved!

Blessed Head of the one Church—militant and triumphant—make my fellowship with the one so spiritual, as to prepare me for fellowship with the other.

ONE family we dwell in Him, one church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream, the narrow stream of death:
One army of the living God, to His command we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now.

September 19th.

DO I ever think of my obligations to God?—

Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments.—Ps. cxix 73.

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.—Eph. ii. 10.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. . . . Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things.—Ps. ciii. 3, 5.

WHEN I was not, God created me. He chose to create me a man, and not a beast. He gave me godly parents and a Christian home. He surrounded me with loving brothers and sisters. All temporal comforts which I needed as a babe, as a youth, and as an adult, He has permitted me to enjoy. He has daily loaded me with His benefits. Even now He “satisfieth my mouth with good things.”

But do I not see other things more marvellous than these? When I was lost, did He not take to Himself my nature and come into the wilderness to find me? When I was a slave to sin, did He not redeem me at the costly price of His own precious blood? He loved me with a love beyond the love of Himself. He restored me from banishment, and gave me a place in His house. He gave me His own name and nature, and engraved me on the palms of His hands that I might be always before Him. He gave His own Spirit to live in me, to teach, to guide, to comfort, to strengthen, and to glorify me! His goodness has been unspeakable!

In how many ways of grace has He visited me! When wandering, He has called me back. He has forgiven me thousands of times. In affliction He has consoled me; in despair, given me hope; in error, given me truth; when fallen, restored me; in temptation, shown me the tempter, preserved me in it, and delivered me from it.

O the fulness, the constancy, of the riches of grace vouchsafed to me at times and in ways beyond my power of remembrance. As Caleb gave his daughter the “upper springs and the nether springs,” so my Father has given me heavenly and earthly springs from which have incessantly flowed streams of blessings, meeting together, to flood my inner and outer life with happiness and purity.

Divine Father! what owe I Thee for these things? “My son, offend me not by asking such a question. Give me thy loving heart. I ask no more.”

A THOUSAND blessings, Lord, to me Thou dost impart,
I ask one blessing more, O Lord,—a thankful heart.

September 20th.

DO *I make full confession of my sins to Almighty God, and seek His forgiving grace?—*

I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.—Ps. xxxii. 5.

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and his life shall see the light.—Job. xxxiii. 27, 28.

And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.—Luke vii. 48.

NO one can be conscious of the number and magnitude of his sins more than I am. I may use the words of David as my words, “Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

To whom then shall I bring such a burden to bear for me? Into whose mind shall I pour such a multitude of sins? Certainly not into the mind of my dearest earthly friend, not to say my enemy. Is there any finite being, whether man or angel, equal to the reception of such a confession? Were my Heavenly Father inaccessible; or being accessible, had no pity, compassion, or love, commensurate with my guilt and sins, I might for temporary relief, confess to my minister. But He is very near me, is infinite in mercy, has an ocean of love in His nature to swallow up all my mountainous iniquities. “Why,” says Chrysostom, “speak it to man who may blame thee? Rather show it to thy Master, to Him Who cares for thee, Who is full of lovingkindness; show the wound to the Physician.”

I will then follow David, and go to his God, Who is my God, and acknowledge my sin and confess my transgression. I will lay open my whole heart before Him. I will have full confidence in Him. He invites me to come. He inclines His ear to listen. As He sees my tears, before I call He will answer. He is full of kindness. I cannot be more ready to receive pardon than He is to give it. My soul bounds with delight, even under the weight of my sins, as I think of the free grace with which my Father “abundantly pardons.” What need I with priest, when He forgives?

“Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.”

MY sins, O Lord, I now confess
With penitential grief and shame;
Though they are great and numberless,
Thou dost forgive through Jesu's Name.

September 21st.

DO I carefully and constantly guard my senses against evil?—

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity ; and quicken me in Thy way.—Ps. cxix. 37.

A naughty person winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.—Prov. vi. 12, 13.

Cease, my son, to hear instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.—Prov. xiii. 27.

I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.—Ps. xxxix. 1.

Set watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips.—Ps. cxli. 3.

I HAVE frequently noticed policemen stationed at the different entrances of a public hall on occasion of great special meetings, to keep out all who had no right to enter. So I have observed persons pull down blinds of windows to exclude too much sunlight ; lock doors to keep out intruders ; sometimes when a knock is heard at the door, the housewife will ask before opening, " Who's there ?" or peep through the window to see, so as to be sure it is no one that she does not want to let in.

From these common occurrences I would learn how to watch and guard my senses as entrances to my soul. I ought to know what should, and what should not be admitted. As nothing is admitted into heaven that defileth, that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, so it should not be allowed admittance into my heart. If at any time certain sights, sounds, words, tastes, feelings have found their way there, and brought evil influences with them, I must expel them promptly, and take good care they do not enter again.

I am not obliged to admit them. They can do me no harm while they are outside. I can use means to prevent them coming in. My house is my castle, and I am free to make choice of my company. Surely there are plenty of pleasant and pure things to entertain, without making my soul the receptacle of all kinds of abominations.

I am my own custodian. Lord, make me true and faithful to myself, and instead of my soul being a "den of thieves," or "a cage of unclean birds," may it be an Eden where the Lord shall walk and angels sing, or a temple of indwelling God.

THE lawless wish, the unaverted eye,
Are as a taint upon the breeze,
To lure foul spirits :—haughty brows on high
Are signals to invite them nigh,
Whose onset ever Saints await on bended knees.

September 22nd.

WHERE am I in my pilgrimage to Mount Zion; in "*Doubting Castle*," or on the "*Delectable Mountains*?"—

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?—Matt. xiv. 31.

He that doubteth is condemned.—Rom. xiv. 23.

Neither be ye of doubtful mind.—Luke xii. 29.

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.—Jas. i. 8.

I AM in "*Doubting Castle*," where I have no business to be. But I got here in the same way as Bunyan's pilgrims. I wandered from the right path, rambled in "*by-meadows*," became weary, and fell on sleep in forbidden ground. When I awoke I saw Giant Despair hanging over me. He made me prisoner, led me forth to his castle, and put me in this horrible den where I find myself. O foolish man, to be so thoughtless. Why did I not keep in the King's highway? What brought me to chase butterflies and go in search of wild flowers? How childish of me to do so. Had I gone on my way as I was told by the lord of the country through which I was passing, I should not have been in this dismal hole!

I have poor fare here. I shall soon die of hunger, if the giant does not club me to death before then. What am I to do? Whither shall I fly? Who can fly hence? These walls, that locked iron door, make my flying impossible.

But is there no help? Blessed be God, there is. I remember now what my Lord has said, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*" Do I not remember how He delivered Daniel from the lions, Peter out of prison, and Jonah out of the whale's belly? I will call upon Him. He is everywhere, even in this dungeon. He can break down the walls, or burst open the door, or send an angel, or kill the giant. There is no restraint to Him.

So "*I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" (Ps. xl. 1-3),

Now I am on the "*Delectable Mountains*." May I never wander again, and fall into the hands of "*Giant Despair*."

OUT of the way we went, and then we found
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground;
And let them that come after have a care,
Lest heedlessness makes them, as we, to fare.
Lest they, for trespassing, his prisoners are,
Whose castle's *Doubting*, and whose name's *Despair*.

September 23rd.

HAVE I sweet composure of soul in God?—

The Lord will bless His people with peace.—Ps. xxix. 11.

He will speak peace to His people and His saints.—Ps. lxxxv. 8.

Great shall be the peace of Thy children.—Isa. liv. 13.

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.—Col. iii. 15.

Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means.

The Lord be with you all.—2 Thes. iii. 14.

TO a nation what is a greater blessing than peace; or to a neighbourhood; or to a church; or to a family; or to an individual; especially when attended with life, growth, development in everything which pertains to the well-being of those which enjoy it.

The peace of God flowing as a river—keeping the heart and mind. The peace of Christ, not as the world giveth, but as it is in Himself, and as He gives it by His Spirit. This is tranquility, equanimity, concord, contentment, serenity, calmness, heaven. It is the food of angels, the music of the spheres, fruit from the tree of paradise. There is none like it. It is a blessing from the Lord; and when He gives peace, who can make war?

It is a strong fortress in which I dwell, and can smile at all the assaults of men and evil spirits. It is a quiet resting place in which I live, undisturbed by the turmoils and conflicts of a world around. No troubles take me by surprise. No fears alarm me. No perplexities provoke me. God guards and defends, and keeps me as a Rock, a Refuge, a Stronghold, a High Tower. He is my Shield and Buckler. I live in the serene regions above, where clouds gather not, where tempests rage not, where winds howl not, where thunders peal no more, and lightnings are unknown. I live in the vestibule of heaven! I have foretastes of its bliss, and gleamings of its glory!

Verily this is a peace that "passeth all understanding." It is not, however, a peace of stolidity, but the peace of *life*, hope, faith, work, and joy, in God. Well may they weep who have it not, and they exult who have it.

May I not only enjoy this peace myself, but seek others to bring them into its enjoyment. May the influence of my peace contribute to the promotion of peace wherever I go.

PEACE, Peace!

Wrought by the Spirit of might,
In thy deepest sorrow and sorest strife,
In the changes and chances of mortal life,—
It is thine, beloved—Christ's own bequest,
Which vainly the tempter shall strive to wrest;
It is now thy right.

September 24th.

WHAT are the things that hinder me from making progress in my Christian life?—

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?
—2 Gal. v. 7.

If ye do in anywise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you, know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes.—Jos. xxiii. 12, 13.

IF a favourite tree in my garden shows signs of languishing, I search for the cause. If my watch fails to keep correct time, I take it to the watchmaker for inspection. If my child loses appetite, and becomes sickly, I send for the doctor.

Should I not act on the same common-sense lines as regards my Christian life, when it shows signs of languishing and decline? Should I not inquire, Where is my faith? What has become of the ardour of my love? Is my zeal for Christ dying? What have I done? Where have I been? Something or other must have taken place to cause this change in my experience. I did run well, but now I can scarcely walk. I once had a keen relish for the “strong meat of the word,” but now I have little or no appetite for anything excepting the delicate and tasty—the light food which gives only a temporary satisfaction. Not long since I revelled, as it were, in the fellowship of the saints, and always availed myself of the privilege, but now I seldom or ever meet with them for edification. In fact, I don’t feel like the same kind of Christian I did some time ago.

Why is it? Have I not given way to selfishness? Have I not become too much attached to the world? Have I not been drawn aside to semi-religious company, entertainments, pursuits, which have acted as cold water on my warm emotions for God? Have I not neglected my Bible for novels? Have I not robbed God of my time, to give it to more business and pleasure?

If these things are so, the causes of my spiritual unhealthiness are palpable. I need go no farther to inquire.

Lord, have mercy upon me, and ere I die the death, quicken Thou me according to Thy word.

I HAVE not loved Thee as I ought,
Nor valued Thy great love to me;
Thy presence I have coldly sought,
And feebly longed Thy face to see.
Let all my soul now feel the Fire,
That shall with zeal my life inspire.

September 25th.

AM I such a slave as to be under the "Go" or "Come," the "Do this" or "Do that," of the body of sin within me?—

Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness.—Rom. vi. 12, 13.

We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—Rom. viii. 12, 13.

If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.—John viii. 36.

WHETHER to be a slave to another or to one's self is preferable may be a question left for casuists to decide. But this I know, to be a slave to one's self is terribly hard to bear. To one's self! Is this so? or is it to one in me that is not myself but another? It would seem from a minute consideration of the question that it is another one than self that dwells in me to whom I am a slave.

I say I will not indulge my appetites or my passions. This second greater self within says, "Thou shalt," and he uses all his reasonings and coaxings to bring *me* to do it. I say, "I will not yield to the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life." This second self says, "It will do you no harm. In fact, it will be a pleasure. No one will see or know of it." He takes hold of *me* by his false reasonings and appearances, and I give way. I do as he bids. He knows that my objections are specious and not real, and so he seizes and drags me against my previous protestations to the doing of the wrong.

Now this other self that so commands and rules me, has no right in me. He is a usurper. But I have given way to him so much and fraternized with him to such an extent, that he considers he has as much right and dominion in me as I have. So he is bold, impudent, and despotic. In my own house, I have to be a slave to an intruder.

Well may I cry out with Paul, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? This carcase of sin to which I am tied: this indwelling corruption which, as a cancer, is eating up my life: this burden which, like a withered arm or mortified limb, hangs on me as lead?

O Thou Stronger than this strong man in me, come and cast him out, and do Thou take the throne of my affections. I will gladly obey Thee, with willing mind and joyous heart.

THE freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,
Or, if a chain, the golden one of love;
Thought, word, and deed his liberty evince,
His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

September 26th.

WHAT kind of life am I building on Jesus Christ, the one foundation of Christian faith?—

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If a man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. —1 Cor. iii. 11-15.

I HAVE lived in a city, all the buildings of which were erected on one foundation, that is, on the earth. The buildings, however, differed very much. Some, for instance, were built of granite, some of ordinary bricks, some of wood, some of mud thatched with straw. I have seen a fire rage in this city. I have viewed the scene afterwards. The granite building suffered little, the brick building more, but the wood and mud buildings were absolutely consumed. The owners of these last properties, as the owners of the others, survived with the foundation, but their works were destroyed.

So I have seen all sorts of Christian works, which have been built on the one Christ as their foundation: works, which in some cases were "gold, silver, precious stones"; other works which were "hay, straw, stubble." I have seen the fires of God's visitations, in persecution, affliction, etc., sweep among them; the consequences were, that some were totally destroyed, while others survived. The builders and foundation in each case outlived the fires. But how sad for one whose works were destroyed, to feel, "All my works are destroyed, because they were flimsy, selfish, pharisaical: though done in the name of Jesus, not for Jesus. I am left as though I had done nothing. Had my works been full of pure and disinterested charity, they would have stood!"

O God, I will be thankful if I am saved so as by fire, and lose all I have ever done, as a shipwrecked mariner escapes with his life, though all his goods perish. But, Lord, I would that what I have done for Thee may abide the fiery trial, that I may receive a reward; but in order to this, my works must be pure, genuine, truthful, loving. Self-righteousness, self-seeking, self-glorification, selfish motives, worldly aims, party purposes: all such will be burnt up. Make me a *wise* builder, O Lord.

CONTROL my every thought, my whole of sin remove;
Let all my works in Thee be wrought, let all be wrought in love.
Then when the fiery test shall come my works to try,
They will abide when I shall rest in mansions in the sky.

September 27th.

DO I pray for the gift and indwelling of the Holy Spirit?—

I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon their offspring.—Isa. xlv. 3.

If ye then being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.—Luke xi. 13.

I CAN do all things which I have to do within the sphere of my natural life without the Spirit of God. I can do all things, too, within the sphere of intellect and morals without the Spirit of God. Also within the sphere of religion I can read my Bible, I can believe in Jesus, I can pray, I can make a profession, without the Spirit. But I cannot see into the hidden spiritual meaning of the word ; I cannot believe in Jesus with the heart *unto righteousness* ; I cannot pray effectually ; I cannot possess the vitality of what I profess ; I cannot attain to the “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” which are in Christ Jesus ; I cannot be born from above, know my sins forgiven, and be sanctified, without Him. I cannot witness a true confession of Jesus, take up my cross and follow Him. In a word, I cannot be a *living Christian* without receiving the Holy Ghost. However near I may be in name and form, I am still dead until the Lord give me His Spirit ; as Adam was until God breathed into him the breath of life. Hence, I need the Holy Spirit to *be* a Christian and to *do* all the essential things of the Christian life.

My Heavenly Father knows that I have need of His Spirit : therefore He has promised this gift. But He will be enquired of for it. For my encouragement to ask Him, His Son has said, that He will more readily give Him to me, as He loves me so much, and wishes His Spirit to live in me, than parents being evil will give good things unto their children.

Then, I will daily ask my Heavenly Father to grant me His Holy Spirit to abide in me always, that from Him I may receive will and power to do continually those things which shall please Him. I will ask for His fulness within me. How much easier and pleasanter are the ways of the Lord, when I walk in them being filled with the Spirit.

MAY the Spirit of the Lord on me His servant rest ;
Come, according to His word, and dwell within my breast :
Teach to judge and act aright, inspire with wisdom from above,
Holy faith and heavenly might, and reverential love.

September 28th.

WHAT manner of person do I appear to myself, in silence and solitude?—

As he thinketh in his heart, so is he — Prov. xxiii. 7.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace; I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.—Dan. iv. 4, 5.

Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will make thee a terror to thyself.—Jer. xx. 4.

IN the distracting noise of the world, in the conflicting activities of churches, and in some of the excitements of religious meetings, thoughts and visions of ourselves are difficult to realise. We try to make the best of what we are before others, thinking little of what we really are to ourselves.

To know what I am *before myself*, I must shut myself away from the noise and companies of the world and religious excitements. I must feel the wings of silence brooding over me, and have all external scenes blotted out from my view. I must be my own spectator, and watch what are the *spontaneous* workings of my heart. I must let these come and go as they list. The imagery of the chambers of my soul must disclose itself as it is, and in its own voluntary way.

In this case, how would it be with me? Should I find that I was so pure as I gave myself credit to be, and as others thought me? Would I not see myself in such lights as would make me a terror to myself? Should not I see evil thoughts and corrupt pictures coming up out of my heart, thronging the chambers of the brain; memories coming back from places of forbidden pleasure, and looking pleasant as in days of old; find that sin still had its secret places within me, and that the main character of my thoughts was earthly, and not heavenly; selfish and carnal, not spiritual and pure?

This would be my *real* self. What I was in the world and in the church would be someone else.

O Lord, I do beseech Thee to cleanse the *whole* of my inner man, and live Thou in me, the "Beauty of Holiness," so that when I am alone I shall never be so little alone; and the vision of Thee shall be so glorious as to blind me to the sight of any other object.

FATHER, in me reveal Thy Son,
And to my inmost soul make known
How merciful Thou art;
The secret of Thy love reveal,
And by Thine Hallowing Spirit dwell
For ever in my heart.

September 29th.

AM I not too easily moved from my religious principles and turned aside from perseverance?—

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. — 1 Cor. xv. 58

Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. — Col. i. 23.

Be diligent to be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless. — 2 Pet. iii. 14.

PERSEVERANCE and stability are admirable attributes to possess in a good cause. What have they not accomplished in the worlds of art, science, and literature!

They are seen, however, to greatest advantage in Christian life. There, they shine in contrast with the discouragements they receive from the nature of him who possesses them, and from opposition they have to face in the powers of the world and of hell. But for the inspiration they receive from heaven they would surrender to their antagonistic forces.

How pleasing a spectacle is that of a young man fearlessly coming out from his sinful companions and avouching himself on the Lord's side, and through inconceivable hostilities from himself, his old associates, and his infernal enemies, standing "stedfast and unmoveable," resisting sin, if needs be, unto blood, pressing forward, bearing his cross, following the despised Nazarene whithersoever He goeth, only ceasing to stand in conflict as he is promoted to stand in glory!

What a contrast to many Christians that are unstable as water; whose goodness is as the early cloud and morning dew; who are cowards in the battle; who are faint-hearted in the storm, and leave Christ alone on the cross!

I dislike cowardice, changing purpose, turning about, faint-heartedness, now here and now there, now this and now that, in religion. Nothing speaks so badly for him who is so affected; nothing reflects so detrimentally on religion; though religion is not to blame. Having made my choice, I wish to abide by it. It is the "good part" and the "one thing needful," that I have chosen.

Eternal Father, hold up my goings; "root and ground me in love."

FAIN'T not, and fret not for threaten'd woe,
Watchman! on Truth's grey height!
Few though the faithful, and fierce though the foe,
Stand thou stedfast in Heaven's might.

September 30th.

AM I seeking great things for myself in the world or in the Church?—

Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.—Jer. xlv. 5.

Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.—Rom. xii. 16.

He that exalteth himself shall be abased.—Luke xviii. 14.

Thus saith the Lord . . . Seek ye Me, and ye shall live.—Amos v. 4.

THERE are mountains in the clouds and castles in the air, but those who climb the one or live in the other have very uncertain footing and occupation. There are those who see small objects as great; others see large objects as small. The former when sought and realised become what they really are—small; those who see things as small or think them such, when they come to them, find that they are beautifully and sublimely large.

So it is when one seeks riches, or honour, or power, or position in this life as great things; if he attain them, alas! they often prove “vanity of vanities.” Others who imagine religion to be of little importance, when they seek and find it, discover it to be the mountain of the Lord, full of the treasures of wisdom, righteousness and truth.

If a man seek great things for himself and find one, he seeks another, and another, until he loses all, and a few feet of earth contains everything he owns. Cyrus, King of Persia, after he had acquired all the great things he could was buried with the following inscription on his tombstone, ordered to be put there by himself: “I am Cyrus who brought the empire to the Persians; do not envy me, I beseech thee, this little piece of ground that covers my body.”

Am I seeking great things? If so, what am I seeking them for? To gratify my pride or ambition? That I may be like others in worldly power and ease? Or, am I seeking them in the fear of God, for His glory, and for purposes of usefulness in His service? I will not *seek* great things; but if they come to me in the way of the Lord, I will receive them with humility and employ them to His praise.

O gracious Father may my great things be such as the world counts little:—to be strong and pure and humble in Thee! In Thee I shall be greater than the world and all it can give.

LET him that will, ascend the tottering seat
Of courtly grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes; as for me,
Let sweet repose, and rest my portion be.

The Conflict Within.

IN *myself* the mighty struggle
Of this mortal life is found,
Here the foes are met together
On one common fighting ground.

Good and evil face each other,
One the other to defy,
And the question for to settle
Is, which of these two shall die.

Flesh and spirit fight each other,
Which shall rule the man within,
One to reign in God's good pleasure,
Or be subject to the sin.

Light and darkness ever striving,
Each to spread within the soul;
Which shall gain the greatest pressure,
And its destiny control.

With *me* rests the solemn issue
To decide which side shall win,
Good or evil, flesh or spirit,
Holiness, or cursèd sin.

On the side my *will* surrenders,
Victory is gained, be sure,
Good or evil, it is strengthened
As my will is vile or pure.

If I look to God to govern
All my will in purity,
Then I need not doubt the issue,
Which will win the victory.

If in *self* the conquest's over,
And its on the side of good,
Other foes we soon can conquer,
In the name and strength of God.

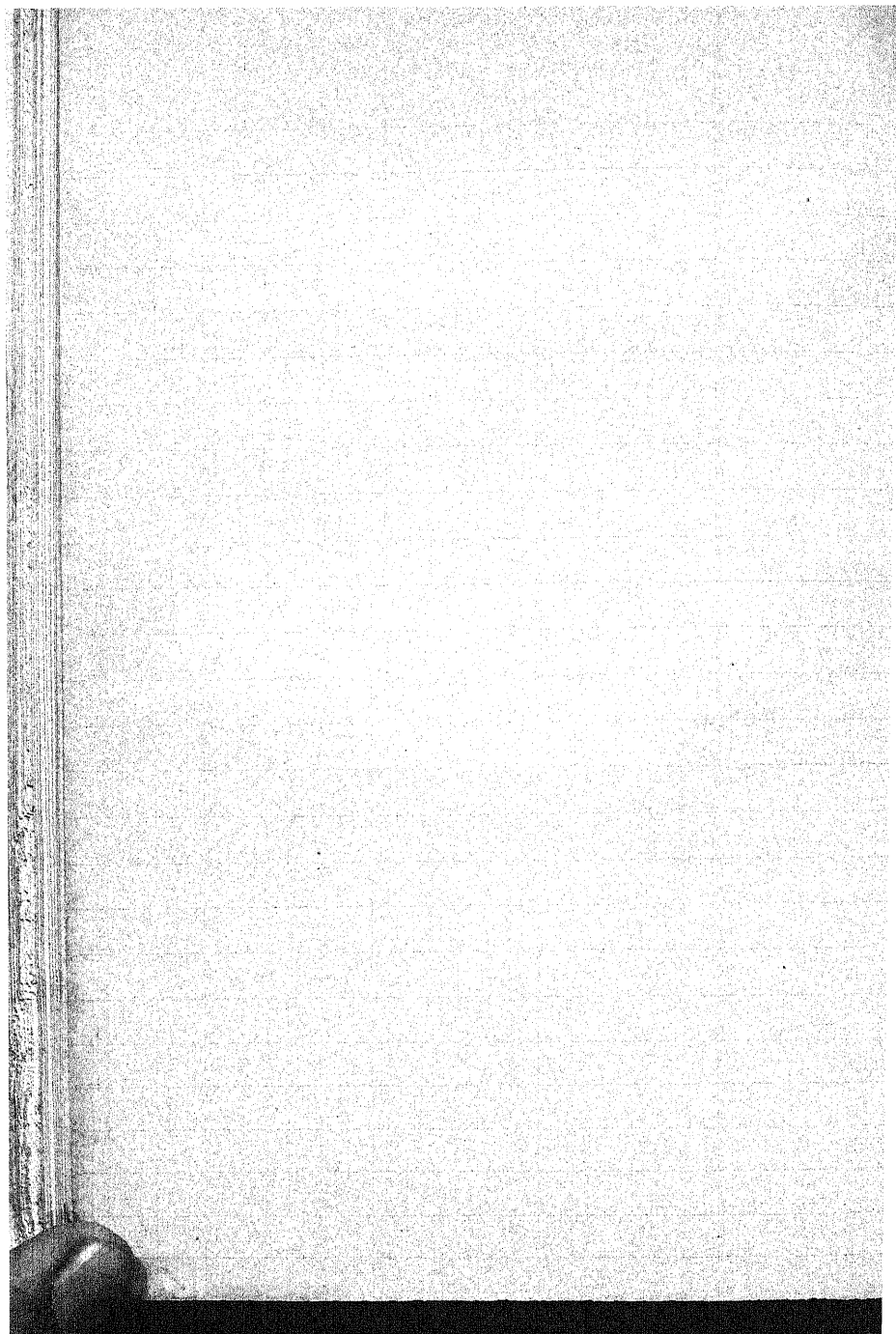
Anon.

The Death of Summer.

BY the lengthening twilight hours,
By the chill and frequent showers,
By the flow'rets pale and faded,
By the leaves with russet shaded,
By the grey and clouded morn,
By the drooping ears of corn,
Ripen'd now, and earthward tending,
As man when full of years is bending
Towards his kindred dust, where he
Lowly soon shall withering be ;
By the silence of each grove,
Vocal late with notes of love :
By the meadow overspread
With the spider's wavy thread,
By the soft and shadowy sky,
By the thousand tears that lie
Every weeping bough beneath ;—
Summer ! we perceive thy death.
Summer ! all thy charms are past !
Summer ! thou art waning fast !
Scarcely one of all thy roses
On thy faded brow reposes ;
Day by day more feebly shining,
Sees thy glorious beams declining,
Though thy wan and sickly smile
Faintly lingers yet awhile ;
Thrush and nightingale have long
Ceased to woo thee with their song ;
And on every lonely height
Swallows gather for their flight ;
Streams, that in their sparkling course
Rippling flowed, are dark and hoarse ;
While the gale's inconstant tone,
Sweeping through the valleys lone,
Sadly sighs, with mournful breath,
Requiem for sweet Summer's death.

A. Strickland.

Memoranda.



October 1st.

DO I attach more importance to Jesus in my Christian life than I do to anything else?—

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.—Luke xxiv. 39.

And when He had so said, He shewed them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.—John xx. 20.

Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.—Matt. xviii. 20.

TO see Jesus Himself with His pierced hands and feet, is demonstration of His reality as the crucified and risen Lord. This, too, is the consummation of earthly bliss to waiting and mourning believers. This is the great need of Christians and of churches in the present day.

Jesus Himself in my heart, the subject of my experience, and the object of my glorying. Jesus Himself as I journey through the wilderness, my Pillar of Fire by night, and Cloud of Glory by day, my Heavenly Manna, my smitten Rock, my Guide, Teacher, Saviour and Friend. Jesus Himself with me in my darkness, sorrows, dangers, and solitudes. Jesus HIMSELF, not His shadow, His picture, His crucifix, His priest. *Himself*, in the beauty and perfection of His nature and character. Jesus Himself in my prayers, in my sympathies, in my charities, in my sufferings, in my home, in my business *in the whole round of life*.

In all means and ordinances it is Jesus Himself I want to meet, to see, to hear and to feel. What are all æsthetic rites and forms, music and singing, *without Him*? Alas! they are only as a dinner of flowers to a hungry man. Jesus Himself, the crucified, in the midst, is the Fountain of life, and the Bread of heaven to those who meet for Christian edification. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord," as "He showed them His hands and His side." To see Jesus Himself in the breaking of bread, makes the Lord's Supper a feast of fat things. To see Jesus Himself in the prayer meeting, makes it a well of salvation. To see Jesus Himself in the Scriptures makes them sweeter than honey or the honey comb.

O Jesus, come *Thyself* to me. What else do I need? Everything is barren, cold, cheerless, profitless, joyless, without Thee. Thou art the medicine for all my ailments, the comfort for all my distresses, the fulness for all my emptiness.

O JOY all joys beyond to see the Christ Who died,
And count each sacred wound in hand and feet and side;
To give to Him the praise of every triumph won,
And sing to endless days the great things He hath done.

October 2nd.

DO I prayerfully and beneficently consider the poor?—

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.—Ps. xli. 1.

He that hath pity on the poor, happy is he.—Prov. xiv. 21.

He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He repay him again.—Prov. xix. 17.

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.—Prov. xxi. 13.

If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.—Isa. lviii. 10, 11.

"THE poor ye have always with you," said the Master of us all. For what are they with us? To oppress, to neglect, to *patronize*, to think them our inferiors, to set them apart by themselves so that they shall not be *with* us?

Far be this from the spirit and conduct of true Christians. Was not the Christ Himself poor? In looking upon a poor man, if I see no other feature of my blessed Lord, I see his *poverty*. Suppose the Christ was to come again and live amongst us, as He lived with His disciples, having "no where to lay His head," what should we do with *Him*? Would He be taken up as a vagrant, and "be sentenced to seven days," or be sent to the "workhouse?" "O," says one, "I would give Him all I have." True, but you speak as though you would see Him as your *faith now sees Him*. But suppose you only saw Him as the Pharisees saw Him, or as He usually appeared in ordinary society, what would you do? Would you be any more generous to Him than to a common beggar that came to your door? Would you recognise Him as the precious Jesus, or only as a poor man, and deal with Him as such?

If I have an abundance of this world's goods, why is that abundance given me, but to supply the wants of the poor? The sun of its abundance of light gives to illumine our darkened earth. The ocean of its abundance of water gives vapours to make clouds and rain for the dry land. Shall I be more selfish than these?

Blessed Jesus! give me a considerate mind and a compassionate heart for the poor. In relieving them, do I not relieve Thee?

FOR in that haggard form He begs unseen,
To Whom for life we kneel;
One little cake He asks with lowly mien,
Who blesses every meal.

October 3rd.

DO I not know that "little faith" has its place and power with God, as great faith?—

And Jesus said unto them, . . . If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you.—Matt. xvii. 20.

WE are accustomed to judge faith, in its measure, by its results. We think of the Hebrew worthies as having great faith. The record does not say so. They had faith, but whether great or small is not stated. The disciples wanted to know why they could not cast the evil spirit out of the young man. Christ's answer was, "not because of your little faith, but because of your unbelief." Then He tells them what they could have done with faith as small as a grain of mustard seed. God accepts little faith as well as great faith, the same as a tradesman takes a penny as well as a pound. Hast thou faith? that is the question. Trouble not about its *degree*. Use thy faith, little or much, and it shall do wonders. Perfumes exhale their odours not by reason of their size, as of their nature. A pearl consists not in the bulk as in the beauty of its gem. So thy faith.

"It is not the quantity of thy faith," says Welsh, "that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean. So a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true fire as a great flame; a sickly man is as truly living as a healthy man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee—it is the blood that it grips to that saves thee. As the weak hand of a child, that leads the spoon to the mouth, will feed it as well as the strong arm of a man; for it is not the hand that feeds thee—albeit, it puts the meat into thy mouth, but it is the meat carried into thy stomach that feeds thee. So if thou canst grip Christ ever so weakly, he will not let thee perish."

I will not glory in my little faith, nor will I be satisfied with it; at the same time, I will not ignore it, but do the best I can with it, knowing that God will acknowledge it and bless it to my good. If I exercise it, it is sure to increase and strengthen. If I cannot see the light and the things it reveals with both eyes, I will see them with one. If I cannot see them at all, I will *feel* them. Lord Jesus, in Thee do I put my trust!

FAITH'S smallest deed more favour bears,
Where heart and will are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade.

October 4th.

DO I foster the grace of chastity in my thoughts, words, looks, dress, feelings, and deeds?—

Ye have heard it said of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.—Matt. v. 27, 28.

Teach the young woman to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home.—Titus ii. 4, 5.

CHASTITY is that pure, spotless, beautiful spirit, permeating and controlling the powers of the new creation in Christ, so that they are impervious to the entrance of anything that shall excite emotions or thoughts contrary to its own nature.

He who has this spirit ruling within, may be called to discharge duties in the midst of sin, but he shall not be contaminated. In the providence of God he may be called to live in a Nazareth, out of which it was thought no good thing could come, yet he shall remain as pure as when he entered. He may be cast into the fires of corruption, or among the lions of hell, but the one shall not scorch nor the other tear him. He is like a man in a bank, handling money, but not coveting it; or like a doctor visiting his patient, without imbibing disease. Who sees and knows sin as the Great Father? Yet He is "glorious in holiness." Did not Jesus bear the iniquities of us all? Yet He was "holy and harmless."

This chaste spirit not only keeps itself well defended and guarded within; but avoids and hates all occasions calculated to communicate any defiling influence from without. As one is not to "look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the glass," lest he should desire it; so this spirit of chastity looks not on beauty and other charms in the fair sex, lest that heart-adultery should follow, of which the pure Saviour warns. So books, and dress, and company, and music, and games, and amusements, and pleasures, likely to bespatter the least evil on the angel-white nature of chastity, are all to be hated under the denomination of "garments spotted with the flesh."

Is there one such spirit as this, save among the infants (but how short-lived in them!) the glorified, and the cherubic host before the throne? God only knows.

O Thou Blessed Jesus Christ, Who wast on earth higher than the heavens in the purity of Thy nature, I would fain aspire to be as Thou wert!

SO dear to heaven is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liv'ried angels lacquery her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt.

October 5th.

AM I convinced that all moralities and church observances are nothing more than refinements of the flesh, and do not avail for my salvation apart from saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?—

If any man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more : Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews ; as touching the law, a Pharisee : Concerning zeal persecuting the church ; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.—Phil. iii. 4-7.

SO have I met with men and women, who, wishing to be good in life, and saved at last, have seized every little religious thing they could which they thought would realise their desires :—Christian parentage and training ; Christian baptism ; confirmation as members of churches ; regular celebration of the “Eucharist” ; constant observance of Divine public worship ; zealous service in the interests of the church. In the end they found them unavailing to give assurance of heaven.

This is illustrated in the following case, given by a French minister. “A lady lay on her deathbed in a beautiful Italian city. She was a Roman Catholic, and received the last rites of the Church. She made confession of her sins to the priest, and received absolution, or, at least, he professed to absolve her. She was not satisfied with a verbal assurance, and requested it to be made in *writing*. This was done ; but even with the document in her hand she did not feel at ease. She wanted something more than a priest’s forgiveness, and so, at her request, friends telegraphed to the Pope at Rome, who immediately responded with his verdict of absolution. Then, taking the priest’s paper in one hand and the Papal telegram in the other, she declared she felt safe, and could defy all the evil spirits of hell on the one hand, and even God Himself upon the other. The Papal absolution was the stronghold of her faith ; but, alas, mortal man cannot speak the word of life to immortal souls, and *just before she died* she evidently realised the vanity and fallacy of *her misplaced confidence*. She tore the papers of absolution, the supposed passports to heaven, into pieces, and crying, ‘*Sonno perduta !*’ (I am lost !) died in hopeless despair.”

O my God, save me from such deception. Help me now to tear up every hope save that which I have in Thine infinite mercy through Jesus Christ.

LET the world their virtue boast, their works of righteousness ;
I, a wretch undone and lost, am freely saved by grace ;
Other title I disclaim ; this, only this, is all my plea,
I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me.

October 6th.

IN the various provocations of life, am I gentle and forbearing as was my Lord?—

Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—Matt. xi. 29.

I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.—2 Cor. x. 1.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Phil. ii. 5.

MOSESES is spoken of as distinguished for his meekness. How much more is Jesus distinguished for this virtue ! He came to His own and bestowed upon them the unbounded benedictions of His love, and all He received was their unbelief and rejection. Yet He showed no resentment. They took up stones to stone Him for His asserting that He was equal with His Father. He might have brought fire from heaven to have consumed them, as Elias, but all He did was quietly to conceal Himself by going out of the temple. John viii. 59. When He was called a Samaritan and a devil, He gave no sign of retaliation at their blasphemy, but answered them with the utmost calmness. He even told them that their blasphemies against Him might be forgiven. On another occasion when they took Him to the brink of a precipice to throw Him headlong over to kill Him, instead of putting forth His power to destroy them, as He might have done, He chose to escape out of their hands, and so prevent their murderous design.

In fact, we have no instance of His asperity or revenge. When Judas comes to betray Him, He meets him with a kiss. He is tranquil before the wicked priests as they falsely accuse Him. Only by a gentle look He rebukes Peter for his ungrateful denials of Him. He is silent before Pilate and Herod. He is calm and gentle under all the indignities poured on Him on the morning of His trial. On the cross He prays for His murderers, and shows His compassion in pardoning the thief by His side.

What a model do I see in my Saviour to copy ! Alas, how unlike Him am I in the little trials and provocations of life ! How impatient and unforbearing ! How inclined to be angry and take offence at small things !

Blessed Jesus, make me more like Thyself in meekness. Help me to follow Thy example of Divine patience, and to show that I am a true disciple of Thine, by being gentle and lowly under all the trials and tribulations of this mortal life.

WITH taunts and scoffs they mock what seems Thy weakness,
With blows and outrage adding pain to pain :
Thou art unmoved and stedfast in Thy meekness :
When I am wrong'd, how quickly I complain !

October 7th.

DOES the spirit of praising God grow in me more and more?—

I will praise Thee with the psaltery, even Thy truth, O my God : unto Thee will I sing with the harp, O Thou Holy one of Israel.—Psa. lxxi. 22.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High.—Psa. xcii. 1.

But I will hope continually, and will yet praise Thee more and more.—Psa. lxxi. 14.

WE are so constituted physically as to *like* things that are good and pleasant; and the more we have of them the more we want. The Psalmist tells us that to praise God is “good and pleasant” (Ps. cxlvii. 1). But alas, how few take pleasure in this delightful exercise! Those that *do*, taste how good and pleasant it is! Like lovers of music, they are at it continually and enjoy it more and more.

When David first begins to praise God he speaks of having done it once a day: “My voice shalt thou hear in the *morning*.” “I will sing of Thy mercy in the *morning*” (Ps. lix. 16). Then it seemed as if he thought that once a day was not often enough; and so he speaks of his “prayer as being set forth as incense, and of the lifting up of his hands as an *evening* sacrifice” (Ps. cxli. 2). Then he speaks of “praying and praising God in the evening, in the morning, and at noonday” (Ps. lvii. 17). That is three times a day. And then he says: “*Seven* times a day will I praise Thee.” Nor was David satisfied with this. The spirit of praise grew so strong in him, that we hear him saying, “I will bless the Lord *at all times* ;” and then he says, “My praise shall be *continually* of Thee” (Ps. lxxi. 6). Yet again he says, “I will hope continually, and will praise Thee *more and more*” (Ps. lxxi. 14).

How much more ennobling to one's soul it is to praise God than to murmur! One makes me like a churl, the other lifts me abreast with the angels. To praise Him “continually” and “more and more” is to do on earth what is done in heaven by its glorious choir that day and night unceasingly laud and magnify His holy name!

O Thou that “inhabitest the praises of Israel,” may my praises of Thee be to me my highest joy!

I’LL praise Him while He lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

October 8th.

IN things doubtful as regards my connections, engagements, and pursuits in life, do I act upon my own counsel, or do I ask counsel of the Lord?—

And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.—Joshua ix. 14.

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin.—Isa. xxx. 1.

They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel.—Ps. cvi. 13.

WHEN the Gibeonites came to Joshua and the “men of Israel,” they came “wilily.” They represented themselves as not belonging to the nations that God had commanded to be destroyed. They produced a kind of “make up” evidence in support of their pretensions. Joshua and the elders believed them, made a league with them, and as a ratification of the league “the men took of their victuals”; that is, the men of Israel did this. But it is significantly added, “They asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.”

Do I not see in these days much that is analogous to this, as between the world and Christians? This world, in its evil, is doomed to destruction as were the inhabitants of Canaan. The world knows it; but there are certain things in it which want to remain, and these craftily come to the powers which are appointed to destroy them. They present themselves under such guises and with such arguments, as make Christians really believe that they are not to be destroyed, and so Christians form a league with them and spare them to live among them.

This they do without asking counsel of the Lord in His word or in prayer. Did they do this, they would learn, as Joshua would have done, had he taken counsel of God, that they are imposters. Mark how successfully the Gibeonites accomplished their end, that even *Joshua* was cajoled. Alas, how frequently the leaders of God’s hosts are deceived by the world’s pretensions, when they ask not counsel of the Lord!

How often are such leagues made with the world by Christians in marriages, partnerships, pleasures, and company! How many are guided by their *wishes*, and fear to ask counsel of God lest their wishes should be denied them.

O Lord, in all things in which there is doubt, may I ask counsel of Thee, and at any cost to myself, follow it fully.

WHEN worldly snares would me entice, with what *seems* right and good,
And have me act by their advice, and not consult my God;
May I look up in earnest prayer for wisdom from above,
And not be caught in any snare, that would my ruin prove.

October 9th.

AM I wholly on the Lord's side?—

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him.—Ex. xxxii. 26.

If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.—Jos. xxiv. 15.

ON the Lord's side! On whose side *should* I be, if not on His? Is there one safer, nobler, happier, holier, or more triumphant? If so, which is it? Where is it?

I feel utterly unworthy to be on *His* side. Why He should have me I don't know, unless it is that He wants me to be identified with Him in everything that is good, just, wise, and pure, instead of being on His enemies' side, which would be my ruin of body and soul, for time and eternity.

Now that I am on His side, shall I be neutral, or only show my colours and brag of them? or shall I only revel in my privileges? or shall I only look on and see how the battle goes? To do so would be cowardice and meanness. If I were not driven out of the camp, as I ought to be, I should soon die in it, and become a castaway!

"We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln," said the speaker of a delegation of Christian people to that good man, during one of the darkest days of the American Civil War. "I do not regard that as so essential as something else," replied Mr. Lincoln. The worthy visitors looked horror-struck, until the President added: "I am most concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side."

Yes, this is the chief point. "My side," "our side." What is that to the Lord's? It may be one of selfishness, sectarianism, worldliness, pride. The Lord's side is always righteous, benevolent, humane, saving, and includes the eternal interests of His people in all things. Let us, then, make our side the Lord's; then we shall never have to ask, "Is the Lord with us or no?" but can always say, "The Lord of hosts *is* with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

O Lord of hosts in heaven and earth, I feel blessedly secure and gloriously honoured by being on Thy side. Make me valiant for Thy truth and Thy people.

FAITHFUL and true may I be found,
Howe'er life's various conflicts rage;
Till death, stand steadfast on Thy side;
For Thee, my every power engage.

October 10th.

IF I am discontented with what I have in this life, is it not because what I have is not God, but only something of earth which I have placed in His room?—

Thou art my portion, O Lord.—Ps. exix. 57.

Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.—Ps. lxxiii. 25.

I cried unto Thee, O Lord : I said, Thou art my Refuge and my portion in the land of the living.—Ps. cxlii. 5.

THERE is no abiding satisfaction to be found out of *God Himself*. I have sought it in the heights of heaven and in the depths of earth ; in the beauties and sublimities of nature ; in literature, commerce, music, science, art ; in theatres, balls, concerts, amusements ; in company, conversation, friends, fellowship ; in riches, honours, power, pleasures. I have applied to every accessible source, but with the same result.

The intellect said, "It is not in me." The eye, the ear, the taste, the emotions, the conscience ; each said, "It is not in me." The earth, with its endless variety of forms, colours, prospects, changes, sounds, harmonies, creatures, benedictions, said, "It is not in me." The Bible, with its wonderful revelations of God and His doings, said, "It is not in me." Religion, in its many forms, ceremonies, creeds, and sects, said, "It is not in me." *Myself*, in all its resources, possibilities, and exercises, said, "It is not in me."

Thus in universal things, I sought satisfaction, and realised it not. All left me as empty as they found me. I was as a sieve into which water had been poured.

At last I thought of my God, the Faithful, the True, the Almighty, the All-sufficient, the Everlasting, the Infinite Father. I turned to *Him*, and cried unto *Him* ; I opened to *Him* my empty, weary heart. He came in. He pervaded and filled my whole being, as the ocean's waters the ocean's bosom.

Now, I said, I have it, I want no more ; I can take no more. As the hemisphere is full of light when the sun shines at noonday, so my soul being full of God, is full of satisfaction. God is the complement of bliss to the universe. He is so to me. He fills me as He fills all things. I am a temple of indwelling God. Awful thought ! But *blessed* reality !

"Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."

COME, O my God, Thyself reveal, fill all this mighty void ;
Thou only canst my spirit fill, come, O my God, my God !
Fulfil, fulfil my large desires, large as infinity ;
Give, give me all my soul requires, all, all that is in Thee.

October 11th.

DO I possess the sure and certain signs of having the true life of God in my soul?—

As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby : If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.—1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Pet. iii. 18.

I stretch forth my hands unto Thee : my soul thirsteth after Thee as a thirsty land.—Psa. cxliii. 6.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.—Psa. xlii. 1.

“NEW born babes” cannot show more satisfactory signs of healthy life than to “desire the sincere milk” of the mother’s breast, and grow thereby proportionately and constantly, so that parents, though they cannot perceive them grow, shall see that they have grown after months or years have past.

If my soul loves the word of God, and feeds on it as manna from heaven ; if I delight in the law of the Lord and meditate upon it ; if its promises are precious and comforting to me ; if I take it as a “heritage,” and it is the “rejoicing of my heart ;” if I esteem it more than “my necessary food ;” if I use it as a light to my feet and a lamp to my path ; then do I evince a life which is of God, and growing up in God.

Further, if I hate all iniquity ; if I shun the company of the ungodly ; if I respect not them that turn aside to lies ; if I touch not, taste not, handle not of things that defile ; if I cleanse myself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, I give positive signs of the life of holiness.

Again, if I love the fellowship of believers ; if I love prayer ; if I forsake not the assembly of the saints ; if the Lord’s supper is to me a feast of love with which I am strengthened in Christ, then I show signs of the life of union with God’s people.

Yet again, if in the depths of my soul I yearn for something which neither means nor ordinances can give, and in the intense-ness of my desires I stretch out my hands unto God, and thirst for Him as a thirsty land for water, pant after Him as the hart panteth after the water brooks, longing for the hour when I shall awake with His likeness, then do I manifest a culminating, crowning evidence of the reality of my divine life.

May I never be so, that these signs shall not be in me, and shown in my life !

LIFE is joy, and love is power, death all fetters doth unbind ;
Strength and wisdom only flower when we toil for all our kind,
Hope is truth ;—the future giveth more than present takes away ;
And the soul for ever liveth nearer God from day to day.

October 12th.

IS it my desire and endeavour to live in peace with all men?—

Let us follow after the things which make for peace.—Rom. xiv. 19.

Be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.—2 Cor. xiii. 11.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.—Rom. xii. 18.

Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.—Matt. v. 9.

Follow peace with all men.—Heb. xii. 17.

I HAVE found peace of mind to be such a blessing, that if possible, I will live in peace with all men. If there is variance at any time it shall be only on one side, and that, not on mine.

Peace of mind is worth more than lawyers' fees; more than one's own opinions; more than the gratification of spite; more than the sweets of revenge. If to be at peace with men, or rather to bring men into peace with Himself, God *sacrificed His only begotten Son*, what is it for me to give up everything, save Him Who is my Peace, to live in concord and good will with all men?

I have seen so much of the quarrels of men and their results, caused by jealousy, or envy, vanity, pride, or retaliation, that I am distressed to think that men are so brutish, I will not say childish, as to surrender their peace to gratify such ungodly dispositions. I know that some men talk much about contending for principle, honour, right, liberty, when, perhaps, nothing is at stake but caprice, selfishness, rivalry, malice, or spite.

"Profess love to thy enemy," says Machiavel, "and if he fall into the water up to his knees, give him thine hand to help him out; if up to the waist, help him likewise; but if up to the chin, then lay thine hand upon his head and duck him under the water, and never suffer him to rise again."

I have not so learned Christ. The deeper my enemy sinks the more will I help him to rise. The more he injures me the more will I try to do him good. If he curse me, I will bless him. If he smite me on one cheek I will turn to him the other also. If he even kill me, I will pray my heavenly Father to forgive him.

JESUS, Lord, Who as Thou bleedest,
For Thy cruel torturers pleadest;
Lesson of all-conquering love!
Grant, by good o'er ill prevailing,
Love unfeigned o'er hate unfailing,
I my Father's child may prove.

October 13th.

DO I consider the relation in which I stand, as a Christian, to the world around, and do I endeavour to live in harmony with the same?—

Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick : and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.—Matt. v. 13-15.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.—Phi. ii. 15.

WHEN I go into a town on a dark night, I want no one to tell me that the lamps burning in the streets are to give light to the people.

If I am, as Paul says, “blameless, harmless, a son of God, without rebuke,” then undoubtedly I am a light in the midst of the moral darkness in which I live. I may not be a sun, a moon, or a star. That, however is not the point. I am a *light*; and it is astonishing of what use the smallest candle is in the densest darkness. Even a glow-worm has been known to save a wandering one from falling over a precipice.

I know there are some that aim at being *great* lights to shine far, and wide, and deep; but whatever their *aim*, they cannot shine beyond their own inherent power, as a taper, a lamp, or a sun can only shine according to its respective capacity.

If my light *shine* I need not tell anyone that it does. If my light is the pure reflection of the Sun of righteousness, I need not fear of its being corrupted wherever it shines. While earth, air, and water, are capable of corruption, sunlight defies all power of contamination.

I need make no *effort*. Light is silent and unobtrusive in its influence. It is most generous and unselfish. It never retaliates when it is refused. How beautiful, beneficent, gentle, powerful, and pure is light; how adapted to all! I need not be concerned whether anybody *sees* my light. That is taken for granted if I shine in a dark place where people live. And if I shine where others are shining, the aggregate light will be the more.

O Thou Light of the world; Thou Sun of the universe, do Thou ever shine in me, that I may have light to give to them that are in darkness.

JESUS, let all Thy lovers shine illustrious as the sun;
And bright with borrowed rays divine, their glorious circuit run;
Beyond the reach of mortals, spread their light where'er they go;
And heavenly influences shed on all the world below.
As giants may they run their race, exulting in their might;
As burning luminaries, chase the gloom of hellish night.

October 14th.

IS it not indeed humbling to reflect upon the little progress that I have made in my pilgrimage Zionward?—

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.—Heb. v. 12.

I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.—1 Cor. iii. 1.

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end : That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.—Heb. vi. 11, 12.

IF, in April I planted the seed of a vegetable or flower, and in due time saw that it had shown itself above ground ; then in July or August found it no more developed than in May, I should think there was something wrong about it.

If I had a child one year old and found, during the lapse of years, it grew no taller and stronger, I should infer it was organically defective.

When I consider how long it is since I was born of God, and began my career of Christian life ; or since I started on my pilgrimage to heaven, and now look at what I am and where I am, I ask myself, “How is it? Why is it, that I have not grown more in the life of God, attained loftier heights of divine grace, and come nearer to perfection in Christ Jesus?”

There must be something essentially out of place. What is it? The babe grows to maturity. The sapling rises to a tree. The sun goes its circle. The river runs its course. Why should I be in spiritual life so contrary to all things around? O, why should I be only just inside the door of salvation when I ought to be near the gate of heaven? Why stumbling and groping in fogs and semi-darkness when I might have been on the mountain top with a cloudless vision of the promised land? These many years journeying in the wilderness, and yet little nearer Canaan than when I left my Egyptian bondage! May not the reasons be such as were in the Israelites? God forbid that I should die in the wilderness!

Blessed God! have mercy on me! Forgive my supineness, my unbelief, my murmurings, my distrust of Thee, and my worldliness. Wake me up to greater diligence. Help me to go on, and “never stand still till the Master appear.”

DEAREST Saviour, hasten hither,
Thou canst make me bloom again;
O permit me not to wither,
Let not all my hopes be vain!
Lord revive me;
All my help must come from Thee.

October 15th.

DOES my faith in the doctrines, duties, rites, and ceremonies of religion rest upon the teachings of the church or upon the teachings of the Scriptures?—

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.—Is. viii. 20.

They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.—Luke xvi. 29.

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.—John v. 39.

I ONCE went into a jeweller's shop to have my watch set to the right time of day. I noticed many clocks in the shop, most of which were going, and making much ado about it, and each indicating its own respective time. There was one, however, which I noticed among all the rest. It was a plain-looking clock, not half so dashy as some of the others, and much older. There it was steadily and quietly ticking, without seeming to notice the loud noise the rest were making. When I gave the jeweller my watch, I observed he at once looked at this particular clock. By that he set my watch, and handed it to me. I asked, "Is that correct?" "Correct!" he answered, "none correct but that: I can rely on that absolutely, when I cannot on any other."

I thought as I left his shop, What a lesson for me! I have in my library Augustine, Bernard, Polycarp, Athenasius, Thomas, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Spurgeon, and hosts of others! They all speak of God, of Christ, of prayer, of the church in its forms, rites, fasts, feasts, orders, and sacraments, but they all differ and disagree, and make much ado about it. But there is the old Bible, the Book Divine, which lies on my table. It makes no noise. It cares for none of *them*. *That is correct. That never errs.* That I can depend upon absolutely. I will set my belief by *that*, leaving all the rest as they are. If I read them, I will read them in the light of this, but not put any one or all of them in its place. However near the "fathers" may bring me to the Divine Standard, I will not stop there: I will go to the Divine Standard Itself, and by that I will regulate my faith in all things of Religion. If that fail me, I am sure the "fathers" are not reliable. If the sun cannot give me light enough, I am sure a star cannot. If Greenwich time is not to be trusted, which is regulated by the sun, how can I trust a village church clock, regulated by the sexton's watch?

THEY word alone my standard be
Of faith and practice in my life,
And not the diverse creeds I see,
The subjects of such wrath and strife.

October 16th.

DO I endeavour to wait on the Lord with a mind free from anxious thoughts and cares of this life?—

And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.—1 Cor. vii. 35.

He . . . that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word: and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.—Matt. xiii. 22.

MARTHA was anxious and troubled about many things. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word.

These two sisters typify two classes of persons that wait before or upon the Lord. There are those who are contemplative, devout, humble, and collected. Their minds, like their bodies, are at rest. Their thoughts are centred on the object for which they have come before the Lord. They look up, and mount up, as on wings of eagles. Their affections all gather around their Lord. Their souls follow hard after God, and are united in all their powers in the pursuit. As Abraham told his young men to stay at the foot of the mount while he and the lad went to its top to worship, so they command all things that would interfere with the sacredness of their waiting upon the Lord, to abide at a distance. As again, at another time, when the birds came on the carcase he was offering to God, Abraham drove them away, so they drive everything from their minds that would affect their attendance upon the Lord.

The next class, like Martha, wait upon the Lord with the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches crowding and disturbing their minds. They are tossed about on this restless sea of things, so that their waiting is full of distraction and unsettledness. While a Mary-like spirit receives the blessing of the Lord, their agitated souls go away with nothing, as a pitcher moved to and fro before a flowing fountain, misses most or all of the water that should have flowed into it.

Alas, how often have I thus waited on the Lord! Like Gideon's fleece, I have been dry, while the dew of the Divine blessing has been falling all around on others. Gracious God, forgive the distractions of my devotions!

O GRANT that nothing in my mind
May mar my waiting on the Lord;
But may I cast all things behind
That are of this vain wicked world.
Without a Martha's carefulness,
But with a Mary's loving heart
May I before Thee wait in peace,
And bid all earthly thoughts depart.

October 17th.

IS it not possible for me, as one who has a message to speak for my Lord, to trust so much in my preparation of it as to forget the help which He has promised to give me in its delivery?—

Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.—Ex. iv. 11, 12.

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay.—Luke xxi. 15.

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he (Stephen) spake.—Acts vi. 10.

WHEN the Lord commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and plead the cause of His people, Moses replied that he was “not eloquent, but of slow speech and tongue.” Though “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” he did not consider himself equal to such a charge; and although the Lord promised to be with him, he hesitated and shrunk from the task.

To teach or to speak for God is a burden that everyone must feel who is called to undertake it, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Paul did. The most educated and intelligent know not too much for this. The illiterate need not despair; for the Lord can speak in and through both alike to effect His purpose.

Such have been the views some have taken of this work, either from man's side or God's, or both, that they have given such pains in the *preparation* of the message as to leave no room for God the Holy Ghost to take any part in its *delivery*. The message has been so refined, elaborated, furbished, humanised, that point, power, edge, adaptability to the cause and the persons, have been so eliminated or hidden, that when delivered or *read*, it has had no effect whatsoever as *a message from God*. As a human production and performance it was “fine,” “grand,” but as a message from God to fallen man, it was a failure.

God says, “I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.” When God speaks through rams' horns or silver trumpets, the sound is effectual; but if men do it, the sound is their's, and not God's.

O, Jesu Christ, help me by Thy Spirit to prepare, by Thy Spirit help me to go, and may the same Spirit be in me, the speaker, the life, and the power of the message.

JESUS, Thy servants bless, who sent by Thee proclaim
The peace, and joy, and righteousness experienced in Thy name:
Their souls with faith supply, with life and liberty;
And then they preach and testify the things concerning Thee:
And live for this alone, Thy grace to minister,
And all Thou hast for sinners done, in life and death declare.

October 18th.

WHICH has obtained the victory in me, the flesh or the Spirit?—

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.—Gal. v. 17.

The good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do.—Rom. vii. 19.

THE conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is sometimes long and painful. The soul seems to itself as if driven about on the billows of an angry sea. "It may even be so that this subjective world of contending forces flings the shadows of its own shapes upon outward things, and the individual shall see out of him an image of the warfare that rages within. Luther's temptations were of this kind. Bunyan's struggles were like these. The calls and responses of the tempter without and evil within, were so loud and strong, that someone seemed to be sending his voice after him, and he would look round and say, 'Who calls?' and again, the deep waking voices of God's Spirit were so distinct and clear, that they seemed as articulate and audible as if they fell on the outward ear."

Do not I know something of this in my experience ? Have not I stood between the flesh and the Spirit, and been the subject of their contrary influences ? Have I not, as it were, almost *felt* the hand of one pushing me towards the evil, and another hand pulling me away from it ? In their fierce and fiery contentions, as to which should gain ascendancy over me, have I not often heard the voice of the flesh saying to me, "Do it this once, other Christians do the same again and again ; you can repent and find forgiveness." Then I have heard the voice of the Spirit saying, "Don't ; you will wish you had not, and if you do, it will make you stronger in the evil to repeat it ; grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, avoid it, pass by it ; keep thyself pure ; resist the devil." Have I not often, between the two opposing powers, felt my weakness almost to despondency, and cried out in the depths of my soul, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" Then have I heard a voice within me, sweet as heaven's music, saying, "Thanks be unto God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

O Thou interceding Saviour, pray for me that my faith fail not in all times of my temptations !

I EVERY hour in jeopardy stand ;
But Thou art my power, and holdest my hand ;
While yet I am calling, Thy succour I feel,
It saves me from falling, or plucks me from hell.

October 19th.

AM I serving God with a perfect heart?—

And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.—1 Chr. xxviii. 9.

But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it.—Num. xiv. 24.

IT is not unfrequently said about the kings of Judah that they did not serve, or walk before the Lord, *with a perfect heart*. So the Saviour intimates that the Pharisees attempted to serve God and mammon. James, the apostle, speaks of a *double-minded man*.

“A man serves with a perfect heart, who serves God in all parts of his duty; and not here and there, but here and there and everywhere; not perfectly indeed as regards the *quality* of his obedience, but perfectly as regards its *extent*; not completely, but consistently. So that he may appeal to God with the Psalmist, and say, ‘Examine me, O Lord, and prove me, and seek the ground of my heart,’ with the humble trust that there is no department of his duty on which the Almighty God can put His hand and say, ‘Here thou art not with me,’ no part in which he does not set God before him, and desire to please Him, and to be governed by Him.”

How far do I come short of serving God with a perfect heart? I fear I am too much divided in mind as to my duties and privileges, so that the one I only partially attend to, and the other only partially enjoy. I try too often to serve God and mammon. How frequently I hesitate as to my choice between ungodly company and the society of Christ’s people. I am sometimes wanting to go in the way of God and in the way of the world at the same time. I am like the ancient Samaritans, who “feared the Lord and served idols.”

“Woe to the double-minded,” said Augustine, “of God’s own they make a share, half to Him, half to the devil! Indignant at such treatment that the devil should be admitted to share, the Lord departs, and so the devil gets all.” Before such a judgment comes upon me, may I repent of my double-mindedness, and like Caleb, follow the Lord *fully*.

Blessed Spirit! *unite* my heart to fear the Lord!—

PLANT and root, and fix in me, all the mind that was in Thee;
Settled peace I then shall find, Jesu’s is a quiet mind.
Lowly, loving, meek and pure, I shall to the end endure,
Be no more to sin inclined: Jesu’s is a constant mind.

October 20th.

DO I work as well as pray?—

And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.—Ex. xiv. 15.

Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.—Matt. xxvi. 41.

Son, go work to-day in My vineyard.—Matt. xxi. 28.

THERE is a great deal of “praying” among Christians; but is there a corresponding amount of watching and working?

To pray is a privilege, and a blessed one too, when we enter into the “holiest”; and in praying, see the Shekinah from over the mercy-seat; or when we are on the mount, and behold His glory. But we must not forget that the enemy may find us even in the “holy place,” or on the “holy mount”: that, neither in one or the other is there much work to do: and where there is little work, there is great temptation.

If then, we do not watch, the foe may seize us as we pray; and if we do not work while it is day, when the night cometh we shall find that with all our praying, our work is undone, and we have lost our wages! Therefore, however much we pray, let us watch and work.

The following little incident illustrates this great necessity:

A pupil was remarkable for repeating her lessons well. Her schoolfellow, rather idly inclined, said to her one day, “How is it that you always say your lessons so perfectly?” She replied, “I always pray that I may say my lessons well.” “Do you?” said the other; “well then, I will pray, too:” but alas! the next morning she could not even repeat a word of her usual task. Very much confounded, she ran to her friend, and reproached her as deceitful: “I prayed,” said she, “but I could not say a single word of my lesson.” “Perhaps,” rejoined the other, “you took no pains to learn it.” “Learn it! Learn it! I did not learn it at all,” answered the first, “I thought I had no occasion to learn it, when I prayed that I might say it.”

Is not the mistake of this girl too common among Christians? If a farmer only prays that he may have a good harvest, will he have one? If a minister only prays that he may be useful, what will be his usefulness? I must pray to God by all means, but if I take no pains to do my duty, to resist temptation, to do good, my praying will be of little service to me.

O Lord, show me the need of working as well as praying.

HELP me, Lord, to work and pray,
And not to sloth give heed,
And in all on Thee to stay
My soul, for all its need.

October 21st.

HAVE I an unwavering and constant trust in the unchangeableness of the Divine promises?—

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who was preached among you by us, even by me and Sylvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.—2 Cor. i. 19, 20.

The word of the Lord endureth for ever.—1 Pet. i. 25.

AS God is unchangeable, so are His promises. Man promises and changes, and as he changes so his promises change. "The tree which in the summer is much esteemed and set by for the grateful shade that it affords, in the cold winter is oft cut down for fuel: and so the same person which in the heat of affection is made the object of many favours, in the keen blasts of jealousy becomes the subject of revenge and ruin." But this is not so with my God. Having loved His own He loves them to the end, and does for them as He promised.

The promises of men are as uncertain as bubbles, no sooner made than broken; God's promises are like the rocks of adamant. Man's promises are dependent upon many contingencies of his circumstances, relations, and power. God's are fixed upon Himself and His oath, two immutable things in which it is impossible for Him to lie.

"Will God do as He has promised?" asks a doubting soul, in its darkness and fears. *Can* God do otherwise than He has promised? is the answer. The sun can sooner cease to shine; the seasons can sooner exchange one for the other; bitter can sooner become sweet of itself, and darkness become light; heaven and earth can sooner change places than the eternal God can fail to do as He has said.

Then, whatever God has said, though it may seem to contradict my reason, and stand opposed to all appearances, I will believe. Like Abraham, Noah, Moses and Elijah, I will not stagger at the promises through unbelief, but trust them simply and fully, giving glory to His name.

What consolation to know that the promises of my Lord are immutable! They abide the same amid all the vacillations of men, and the contrarieties of events. What a joy to feel their certainty!

Father, I thank Thee for Thy promises, in which I have such everlasting comfort!

HOW well Thy blessed truths agree!
How wise and holy Thy commands!
Thy promises, how firm they be!
How firm our hope and comfort stands!

October 22nd.

IS it not better for me to be an imperfect regenerate man than to be a perfect natural man?—

If thy right hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.—Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

I HAVE heard men of the world say, "We do not see but that we are as good as you Christians. There are few things, if any, that we do, but you do also."

In the first place, some discount must be taken from this statement. Then it must be considered what Christians are referred to. It is very likely there may be certain so-called Christians to whom the remark is applicable. Further, it must be asked how far these men of the world are competent to judge? Being personally concerned, are they properly qualified to judge in the case?

If the remark does really apply to some who are Christians indeed, then in answer to it, one may observe that to have one eye is better than being blind in both, or to have one hand is better than to have no hand at all. To walk limpingly or with crutches is preferable to paralysis in all the limbs. To stutter and stammer in speech is more desirable than to be dumb.

I make no apology for short-coming or misbehaved Christians. All I say is, a partially defective living Christian is better than an entirely unconverted sinner. Up to a certain point the two may seem to be like each other, beyond that, they part and become dissimilar: as between a statue and a man there may be wonderful likeness until you come to the point of *life*.

However, I would by divine grace so exhibit the Christian life and conduct as to give no cynical or critical worldling an opportunity of saying I am no better than he. It is my privilege to be as distinct from him as the true from the false, the gold from the granite, the light from darkness.

O God, by Thy Almighty Spirit, make me so perfect that between me and the best moral man of the world there shall be as marked a difference as between Thyself and Belial.

SOME lead a life unblameable and just—
Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust!
They never sin!—or if (as all offend)
Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,
The poor are near at hand—the charge is small,—
A slight gratuity atones for all!

October 23rd.

DO I duly consider what is the object of my calling in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?—

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.—1 Cor. i. 9.

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth : whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 Thes. ii. 13, 14.

EVERY calling in life is one in many, or many in one ; that is, for instance, he who is called to be a soldier is called to defend his country : but this one call implies a call to discipline, to fidelity, to promotion, and to honour. This idea applies to most callings.

Thus it is, with my calling in the Gospel. I am called to be a Christian after the pattern of Christ ; but in this one call there are many ; that is, a call to repent and believe the Gospel, a call to prayer, a call to self-denial, a call to be a saint, a call to the fellowship of the saints, a call to be faithful unto death, a call to liberty in Christ Jesus, a call to suffering for Christ, a call to work in His vineyard, a call to glory and virtue, a call to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. This calling is a "holy calling," a "high calling," a "calling of God in Christ," a "calling according to His purpose."

Now as all things in one calling depend upon whether the calling as a whole is chosen, so it is in my calling to be a Christian. I must first decide as to whether I will be a Christian ; that settled, then all the other inclusive callings follow.

I bless God that years ago I decided to be a Christian. But since then have I obeyed all the callings which arise out of that ? On this, I hardly dare speak. I think I must leave it with Him Who is my righteous judge. As in the army of an earthly monarch, the great bulk remain in the rank and file without promotion ; and as in the ordinary occupations of life, the majority keep on the common level ; so it is in the Christian world. The majority of Christians are satisfied whereto they have attained, and make little or no effort to obey their respective callings in the Gospel. I fear I am among them.

O God, while thankful that I have not forsaken my rank and turned renegade, I am sorry that I have not been more faithful and made more progress in Thy service.

JESUS calls me from the evil in a world I cannot flee

From each idol that would hold me, softly, clearly, "Follow Me."
Thou dost call me ! May I ever to Thy call attentive be,
Give my heart to Thine obedience, rise, leave all, and follow Thee.

October 24th.

AM I sensible of the danger of secret sin?—

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.—Heb. iii. 12, 13.

Lay aside every weight and the sin which doth easily beset you.—Heb. xii. 1.

HOWEVER “high in salvation and in the climes of bliss” a believer may walk in this life, he is not exempt from the danger of falling, and the higher he walks the greater his danger. Hence, he who is highest in grace has need, perhaps, to watch most vigilantly against his dangers. The nearer heaven, the nearer hell, if we fall. It is the best and mighty, that the devil strives chiefly to ruin. *Everyone* is liable to fall, and therefore should “watch and pray.”

“I have read,” says the Rev. T. Cuyler, “that a shepherd once stood and watched an eagle soar out from a cliff. The bird flew far up into the air, and presently became unsteady, and reeled in its flight. First one wing dropped, and then the other; presently, with accelerated speed, the poor bird fell rapidly to the ground. The shepherd was curious to know the secret of its fall. He went and picked it up. He saw that when the eagle lighted last on a cliff, a little serpent had fastened itself upon him; and as the serpent gnawed in farther and farther, the eagle in its agony reeled in the air. When the serpent touched its heart, the eagle fell. Have you never seen a man or woman in the church, or in society, rising and rising; the man becoming more and more influential, apparently strong, widely known, asserting power far and near; but, by and by, growing unsteady, uncertain, reeling, as it were, in uncertainty and inconsistency, and at last falling to the earth, and lying there in hopeless disgrace, a spectacle for angels to weep over, and scoffers and devils to jeer at? You do not know the secret of the fall, but the omniscient eye of God saw it. That neglect of prayer, that secret dishonesty in business, that stealthy indulgence in the intoxicating cup, that licentiousness and profligacy unseen of men, that secret tampering with unbelief and error, was the serpent at the heart that brought the eagle down.”

Almighty God, if Thou seest in me any sin that is eating its way into my heart show it me, and help me this instant to kill it!

AND is there, Lord, some sin, Lurking within my breast,
Eating my life within, And giving me no rest?
O Lord, the evil now remove, And fill me with Thy perfect love.

October 25th.

IF I go forth among men to witness or to work for Jesus, in what spirit do I go?—

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.—Matt. x. 16-18, 22.

IN bearing witness to a person or working in a cause, the *spirit* should be in harmony with the person or cause, or more harm than good may be done.

In witnessing and working for Christ, *His* Spirit should move and actuate us, or we may unwittingly witness and work for our own interests, or the interests of others with whom we are associated, rather than for *Him*.

One evidence of witnessing and working for Christ in His Spirit, is the opposition we receive from the world. As His true witnesses, Jesus said, the world would hate us, persecute us, cast us out of their synagogues, bring us before magistrates, put us to death, and think that in all this they were doing God service.

Why this opposition on the part of the world? Because our testimony and work for Christ, like Christ's, are *against* the world in its evil; and as the world hated and killed Him, so it will His witnesses who do as He did. "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also; if they have kept My saying, they will keep your's also."—John xv. 20.

So long as the testimony and work of Christians are *negative*, or even a *compromise* with the world, the world is quiescent, and even shows sympathy, and in its way comes over to help them; but the moment it takes knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and cannot speak or do any other things than they have seen and heard of Him, it rises in its Sanhedrins, issues its edicts, and deals with them as it did with Him.

Lord Jesus, may I never give an uncertain sound, when I testify of Thee, though my name may be cast out as evil, and myself persecuted to the death.

WE are brothers and comrades, we stand side by side,
And our faith and our hope are the same;
Let us think of the cross on which Jesus has died,
When we bear the reproach of His name.

October 26th.

HOW far am I able to carry out the good purposes of my heart?—

And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto My name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless thou shalt not build My house; but thy son . . . he shall build the house unto My name.—1 Kings viii. 18, 19.

My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.—Job xvii. 11.

THE purposes of the heart are only known to God, and to him in whose heart they dwell.

Purposes are often broken. Sometimes one has formed purposes in his heart to be a better man; but unexpected causes have interposed to frustrate them! How often has one had it in his mind to do some specific good for God and humanity; but has been prevented by the envy or jealousy of others, or by some delinquency of his own, or by change of times and circumstances. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak!

It was the purpose of Moses to lead Israel into Canaan. The Lord did not permit him, but appointed Joshua to do it in his stead. It was in the heart of David to build a temple for the Lord, but the Lord would not allow him, but commanded Solomon to do it.

But in both these instances, God gives them credit for the purposes which they had.

No one can tell which is entitled to more honour: the one that dies with good purposes unfulfilled, or he who takes them up and carries them out. God says to him who had it in his heart to do a good work, but was hindered, "It was well that it was in thine heart"; and He says to him who comes after and accomplishes it without hindrance, "Well done."

As to my own salvation, it is in my heart to be saved and get to heaven; but I know that I have no strength in myself to carry out this purpose. Of this, however, I am assured that if I sincerely *purpose* to be saved, I shall be saved; not because I purpose, but because God, in response to my prayer and in conjunction with my efforts, will take up my purpose and fulfil it according to His word.

BETWEEN our acts and our intentions ever
There is a bridge without a parapet:
Beneath flows life's unreturning river;
So narrow is the way, that one, to let
The other pass, must disappear: and never
Have these quick travellers escaped as yet
That dangerous encounter.

October 27th.

ALTHOUGH Jesus is so little thought of by the world, is He to me such a glorious reality that I would willingly endure any amount of reproach and privation for His dear Name?—

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you —Matt. v. 11, 12.

If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.—Jno. xv. 20.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.—Phi. i. 29.

IT is impossible to specify or conceive all the hardships a man with a sane mind will endure for the love of *dear life*. To what extremities will one be driven before he will give up *hope* ! And *love*, what has not been suffered for that ; and as for *wealth*, fiction fails to describe the sacrifices of honour, self-respect, honesty, and virtue to acquire and to hold that ; the same may be said of *beauty* and *happiness*.

Now, as Jesus is my Hope, my Love, my Wealth, my Peace, my Beauty, my Happiness ; in a word, my “ All in All ” in a life that is far more precious than this mortal life, I will, in His strength, rather submit to any suffering, reproach, privation, imprisonment, and death, than surrender Him. I will hold to Him, and I am sure He will to me. Rather than be parted, we will be imprisoned together, be tortured together, be afflicted together, die together, or even go into hell together. Luther said he would rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without Him.

Judas may sell Him for “ thirty pieces of silver ” ; Demas may forsake Him for this “ present evil world ; ” others, for this or that, may deny Him, or falsely profess Him, or exchange Him for a human Christ, or a Pharisee’s Christ, or a Papist’s Christ, or a Devil’s Christ ; but by His help, I will, like Paul, suffer all things, or like the holy martyrs pass through all forms of torture rather than part from Him, or say one word to His shame or dishonour. As He hung on the cross for me I will hang on Him for salvation evermore.

Blessed Jesus, help me ! May I always know Thee from every other Christ, by Thy five bleeding wounds and thorny crown. Rather than be shy of Thee because of *them* may I say as Thy servant of old, “ God forbid that I should *glory* save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

IN Thee all fulness dwelleth, All grace and power divine,

The glory that excelleth, O Son of God is Thine :

I worship Thee, I bless Thee, To Thee alone I sing ;

I praise Thee, and confess Thee My glorious Lord and King !

October 28th.

HAVE I that kind, brotherly spirit which unselfishly promotes another's good before my own?—

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. —Phil. ii. 4, 5.

But to do good and to communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. —Heb. xiii. 16.

THE spirit of human nature is essentially selfish. It seeks its own interests first and last. If in promoting others' welfare, it can serve its own most, it will do so. It has no conception of helping others at its own cost.

In this, it widely differs from the spirit of the *new* nature possessed by him who is a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus. This spirit is a gift from Him Who "pleased not Himself," but to save others, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Its life is one of ungrudging self-denials and self-sacrifices, in doing good. It looks not on its own things, but also on the things of others (Phil. ii. 4).

Thomas Samson was the name of a Cornish miner, who worked very hard every day for a living. The overseer of the mine said to him one day, "Thomas, I've got an easier berth for you, where there is not so much work to do, and where you can get better wages. Will you accept it?" Most men would have been delighted at such an offer, and would have taken it in a moment. But what did this Christian man do? He said to the overseer, "Captain, there's our poor brother Tregony: he has a sickly body, and is not able to work as hard as I can. I am afraid his work will shorten his life, and then what will his poor family do? Won't you let him have this easier berth? I can go on working as I have done." The overseer was wonderfully pleased with Samson's generous heart. He sent for Tregony, and gave the easy berth to him.

Here was a noble spirit—the spirit of Christ. May it reign and rule in me! May I enjoy the blessedness of those who give more than of those who receive. May the luxury of doing good, for Christ's sake, be mine every day.

Lord Jesus, breathe this spirit into me from Thyself! There is no other source from which I can receive it.

○ MAKE me willing, Lord,
Myself, and all I own,
To sacrifice for others' good
As may to me be known.

October 29th.

IN times of temptation, do I think of the temptation? Or, do I think of Jesus and His all-sufficient grace to help me?—

In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.—Heb. ii. 18.

Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. xii. 3.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.—1 Cor. x. 13.

TEMPTATION is as necessary to perfect a Christian as fire to purify silver and gold, to make them ready for coinage in the king's service. If I am base metal, the fire will destroy me; if real, it will only destroy my dross, and leave me better than it found me.

An old writer says, "The first victory over a temptation, is to know that which tempts us. Some temptations are gay and smiling at their beginning, as those of love and pleasure, which end in terrible and bitter storms. Others are troublesome and irksome. Others rapid and sudden, which seize upon their prey like an eagle. Others are close and catching. These are the snares of Satan, who foams like a boar, roars like a lion, and hisseth like a serpent. We should always have an eye ready to mark from whence the temptation comes, whither it tends, what is the root of it, what the cause, what the progress, and what power it may have over our spirit."

Whatever my temptations are, may I have courage to face them and patience to endure them. May I not allow the tempter to persuade me that his temptations are sin; that it is a sign of my bad nature to be tempted; and that being tempted I am worse than I ought to be.

Against *this* temptation, may I remember that Jesus, the Holy One, was tempted; that the best of saints have been, and are, tempted; that Satan's temptations, instead of proving me to be worse than I ought to be, rather indicate his malice in wanting to make me worse than I am. May I not be ignorant of his devices, but watch and pray against them. May I resist him stedfastly in the faith, and he will flee from me.

Lord Jesus, Who Thyself wast tempted in all points as I am, pray for me that my faith fail not, and give me grace to help me in every time of need.

AND if I tempted am to sin,
And outward things are strong,
Do Thou, O Lord, keep watch within,
And shield my soul from wrong!

October 30th.

IS Jesus to me only an object of contemplation ; or, is He also, a subject of blessed experience ?—

I am the vine, ye are the branches ; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.—John xv. 5.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God.—1 Cor. iii. 16.

Christ liveth in me.—Gal. ii. 20.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.—Eph. iii. 17.

As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.—2 Cor. vi. 16.

I MAY contemplate Jesus in the names, attributes, works, words, and relations in which He is brought before me in the Scriptures. Another may do the same. The results in each case may vary or they may not.

Hence, while many think of Christ, many differ in their views of Him. These diversified views are not *in Christ*, but only in the minds of those that contemplate Him. He is one and unchangeable in Himself.

But Jesus seen so differently in contemplation, is alike in the *experience* of all. Yes ; as *experienced* the same in all, as contemplated, different. As an *historical* Christ He is seen in varied lights, as a *saving* Christ He is *felt* in only one.

This perhaps is easy of illustration. Two philosophers may differ in their scientific contemplations of the sun, but as they walk in its light, and feel its genial influences, they agree as to its benefits. Six persons may differ in their criticisms of some statesman or poet, but in their knowledge of him from personal acquaintance and friendship, they may perfectly agree. So it is that Christian *students* of Jesus vary so much in their mental conceptions of Him, but so far as they *experience* Him in their hearts they agree.

To contemplate Jesus in what He is in Himself, what He is to God, and what He is to me, is sublime, but to know and to love Him, as he reigns in my heart by faith, is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Devils may contemplate Jesus, but He is only known as He is loved.

As my contemplation of Thee, O, Jesus, on earth must be defective, let my *experience* of Thee be such as shall give a sweet consciousness that Thou art my present Saviour from all sin. When I see Thee as Thou art, in the light of Thy own glory, then shall my contemplation and experience of Thee be perfect.

JESUS, Thou joy of loving hearts ! Thou fount of life ! Thou light of men ! From the best bliss that earth imparts, I turn unfilled to Thee again, Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood ; Thou savest those that on Thee call ; To them that seek Thee, Thou art good, To them that find Thee, All in All.

October 31st.

DO I cherish within my heart the spirit of contentment for the lot in life which I have?—

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.—Phil. iv. 11.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.—1 Tim. vi. 6.

WHEN I know that my lot in life is of God's appointment, I can willingly bow to Him, and praise Him for it. To be contented with any thing He gives or withholds, is the banquet of happiness.

I learn a lesson on this from the following incident :—

A boy was minding his sheep in a beautiful valley. He felt so happy that he was all the time singing aloud, to express the joy and thankfulness of his heart. Wherever he was, the glad echoes of his cheerful voice could be heard. One day the king of that country was out hunting. He was not known as the king, except by the friends who were with him. He heard this poor boy's merry songs, and thought he would like to have a little talk with him. So he made his way up to the boy, as he sat singing under a tree, while he was watching his sheep.

"Well, my boy," said the king, "tell me what it is that makes you so happy."

"Why shouldn't I be happy?" said the boy; "the king of the country is not richer than I am."

"Indeed!" replied the king. "Please tell me what you've got to make you so rich."

"Well, you see, sir, the sun in yonder clear blue sky, shines as brightly for me, as it does for the king. The trees on the mountains, and the grass and flowers in the valley do as much to please my sight, and make me glad, as they can do for him. Look at these two hands! Why I wouldn't be without them for all the gold and silver that the king owns; and then I have the use of my eyes and my ears; I have all the food I want to eat, and all the clothes I want to wear, and what can the king have more than this?"

"You are right," said the king, with a smile. "But your greatest treasure is, that you have a contented, grateful heart. Keep it so, my young friend, and you will always be happy."

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content—
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;

Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent—

The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown.

Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy when princes oft do miss.

The Prodigal.

AND thou art he! But ah! how changed
Since last I looked on thee;
Ere from thy father's house, estranged,
Thou soughtest to be free.
With love as with a garland crowned
Light rested on thy brow;
And joy was in thy footfall's sound,—
There's sadness in it now.

That quivering lip, that clouded eye,
That pale and wasted cheek—
Oh! what a tale of misery
And sin and shame they speak!
Ay, speak of thee, o'er whose young head,
Ere yet by guilt defiled,
An honoured sire his blessings shed,
A holy mother smiled.

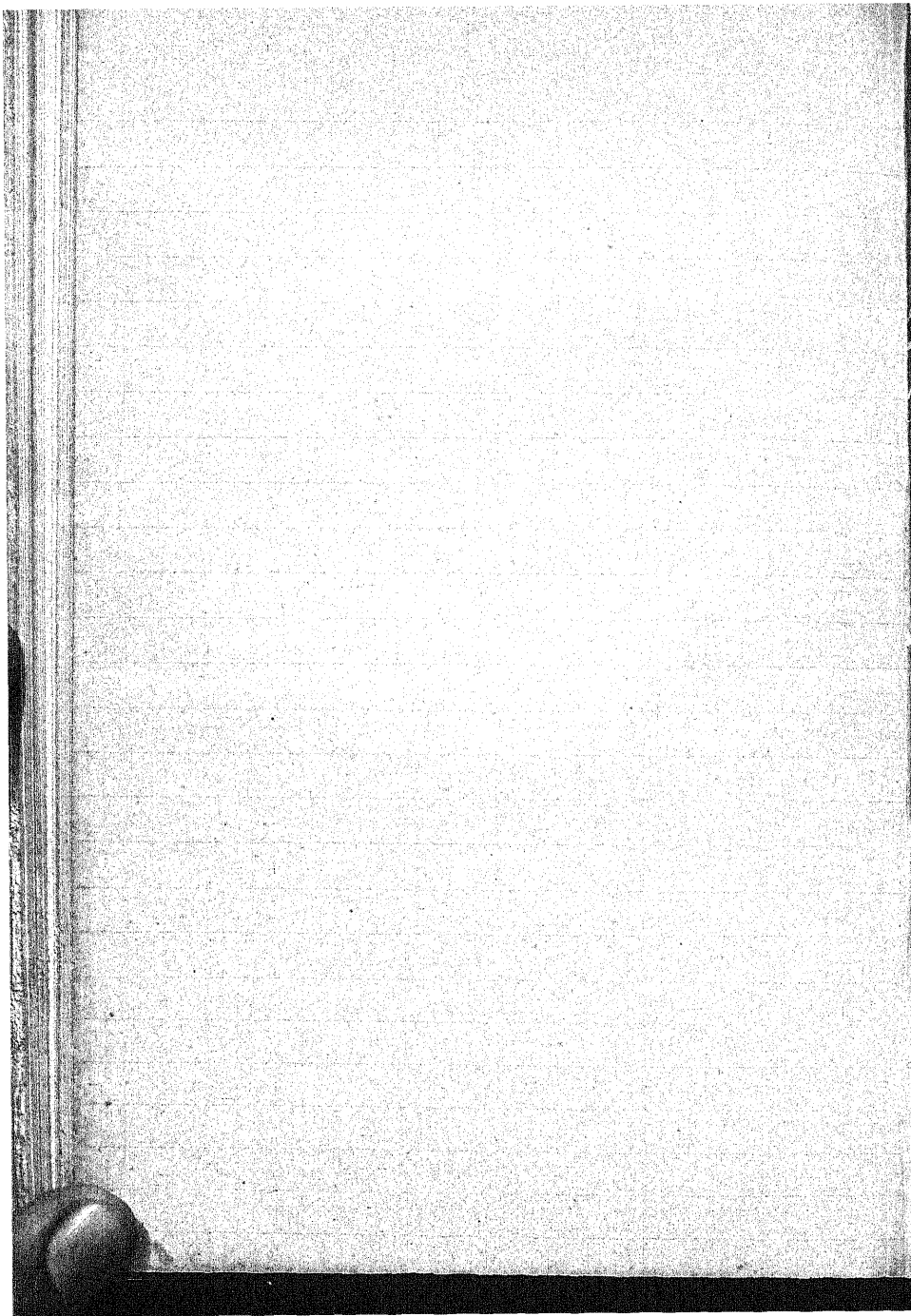
And where is now the siren throng,
So full of mirth and glee,
Who filled thine ear with their wanton song,
As they spent thy substance free?
Oh! they merrily laughed as the cup they quaffed
Till they saw thy wealth run dry;
Then flung thee off, with taunt and scoff,
And bade thee work or die.

Return, thou wanderer, return!
Why shouldst thou longer roam?
The fires of love still brightly burn,
Within thy childhood's home.
Wealth in thy father's halls is stored,
And raiment rich and fair;
There's plenty on thy father's board,—
Why shouldst not *thou* be there?

Arise! thy sin 'gainst earth and heaven
Is deep, as sin may be;
Yet not too deep to be forgiven;—
There's mercy yet for thee.
Go to thy home! thy father's heart
Waits thee with welcome there:
Go to thy God! He'll grace impart;
'Tis He who answers prayer.

W. L. Alexander.

Memoranda.



November 1st.

DO I lose sight of the ruggedness and burdensomeness of the cross which I carry, in the revelations that I have of the loveliness and excellence of Jesus, whom I follow?—

Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips; therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever.—Ps. xlv. 2.

My Beloved is . . . the chiefest among ten thousand.—Cant. v. 9.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley.—Cant. ii. 1.

I am the bright . . . and Morning Star.—Rev. xxii. 16.

I CANNOT be called to carry a heavier and more rugged cross than my Saviour bore. His cross was the one on which His enemies crucified Him. The one that I carry, however rugged and heavy, will not be my crucifixion cross, as His was; but one which will be transmuted into a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Whilst I might *feel* the cross I carry (it is only right I should), I must not complain, or give way under it. I must not throw it off. Rather will I, like my Master, look at the joy set before me, not so much the joy of heaven, as the joy that is in Him for me as I follow Him. I will mark His footsteps, and consider the joy of treading in them. I will contemplate His purity, and drink of its joy as I participate in its nature. I will note His sublime spirit in its meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, resignation, self-sacrifice; and imbibe its divine fulness. In these, and other views of my Lord, as I see them in following Him, I shall, as it were, forget that I have a cross at all. I will, at least, rejoice that I am permitted to be like Him, by carrying one after Him. I will say nothing about it as being heavy or irksome. I will speak of *Him* and His *love*. I will testify of the revelations of excellencies which I behold in Him. It shall be my endeavour to persuade others to see Him as I see Him, and to take up *their* cross and follow Him.

I would rather bear all the crosses that could be put upon me, and follow HIM, than have no cross and forsake Him.

Blessed Jesus, never may I lose sight of Thee. To see Thee makes my cross light and easy. Not to see Thee, my cross becomes a burden too heavy to be borne.

JESUS, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee,
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my All shalt be;
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped, and known:
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heaven are still my own.

November 2nd.

IS my faith a working or an inactive faith?—

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.—Gal. v. 6.

Faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.—Jas. ii. 17.

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love.—1 Thess. i. 3.

A YOUNG minister of Jesus Christ fell into melancholy. He went to a brother minister, in whom he had great confidence, and said, "I have been at work for years trying to save others, and I fear I am myself a castaway. I see no other way than that I must be lost."

The minister replied, "O, my dear brother, leave all that to the Lord. He will take care of you. Just go forward working on for souls to bring them to Jesus, and all the walls of doubt and difficulty will soon fall down before you. You will come off conqueror, and more than conqueror over all."

The young man made up his mind, and set himself to work more earnestly than ever. If at any time darkness gathered on his soul, work was the means of dispersing it. If he was tempted, work put the tempter to flight. If coldness or drowsiness crept over him, work awoke and warmed him. Work was his chief specific for every ill to which he was subject.

The work of faith and labour of love for Jesus is indeed a wonderful remedy for spiritual *ennui* or depression. With this evil thousands of Christians are suffering; from which they would soon be delivered by *doing something* for God. Wesley testifies how for soul and body he found work his principal relief.

Those that work hardest for Christ have most rest and joy in Christ. Faith soon goes to sleep, and becomes enervated without work. Being workless, James tells us it is dead. Life discovers itself by action, so does faith by its service. Words may say, "Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed," but only working faith will do the deeds. Canaan showed itself a good land by its fruits, and Dorcas that she was a good woman, by the coats she had made.

May I never have a faith dormant or dull; a soul enervated and asleep. May I *die* of hard work for Christ rather than rust out in lying by as an unused tool.

Thou ever working God, stir up Thy *gift* in me, and stir *me* up to use it for some good purpose.

FIND thy reward in the thing which thou hast been blest to do, Let the joy of others cause joy to spring up in thy bosom too! And if the love of a grateful heart as a rich reward be given, Lift up the love of a grateful heart to the God of love in heaven!

November 3rd.

DO I cherish and practice the Christian grace of kindness?—

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.—Ep. iv. 32.

Put on . . . as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any : even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.—Col. iii. 12, 13.

THERE is kindness sometimes found in human nature apart from Divine grace, as in summer flowers are met with by the roadside or even in a forest. But *Christ's* kindness is like a flower growing in a conservatory all the year round under the culturing care of a gardener. It shows its beauty and gives out its fragrance to all who come within its reach. A true Christian *thinks* in kindness, *looks* in kindness, *speaks* in kindness, *feels* in kindness, *acts* in kindness. His kindness is generous, noble, divine. It is tender-hearted, forbearing, forgiving, helping, comforting. It lives in the house, in the shop, in the street, everywhere. It has no respect of persons.

This is kindness after Christ. Will the kindness after human nature only compare with it ? No more than the flower of a thistle with a prize-taking chrysanthemum. The one is sometimes mistaken for the other by those who do not take pains to distinguish between things that differ.

This is a world of care and sorrow in which I live; tears are more copious than smiles are abundant ; there is more poverty in it than affluence, more burdens than wings, more valleys of Baca than hills of delight. There is no place, no time, no person, but give scope for my kindness. Wherever and whenever I sow the seeds of kindness they are sure to grow and yield fruit which will be more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. Though I may sow only for others to reap, I shall have my reward. Great is the power of Christian kindness. It is as oil poured on troubled waters. It brings tears or smiles, when harshness exasperates and hardens. This power conquers when all other fails. This may remain when all other power has been taken away.

Thou God of lovingkindness, breathe into me a larger measure of Thy Spirit.

BE useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want, and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, good parts, and mercy are the way
To compass this, find out men's wants and will
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
To the joy of doing kindnesses.

November 4th.

IN what manner and spirit do I attend to my prayers?—

I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also :
I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.—
1 Cor. xiv. 15.

God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship Him in
spirit and in truth.—John iv. 24.

PRAYER is that precious privilege which brings us into the
immediate presence of God through Jesus Christ. This
it does whether our prayers are private, social, public, or
ejaculatory. Our manner, in either instance, should be devout,
humble, reverential, attentive. How should we conduct ourselves
in the presence of an earthly sovereign and father? Surely He
Who is Ruler of all worlds and the Father of all mercies, should
have the highest behaviour of which we are capable.

How do I appear before God in prayer? Am I deferential
or trifling? Do I look about me, or close my eyes as helpful
to concentration of thought? Am I restless and unsettled,
weary of the service, and glad to be released? Do I act proudly, as
the Pharisee? or do I humbly and penitently pray as the Publican?

If the external manner of appearing before God in prayer
is important, the *spirit* of prayer is much more so. Although
in the form there should be all such propriety as becomes us and
we can render, it is not that which makes prayer. If we have
nothing more than form, we pray to Him to no purpose. God
looks at the heart. He listens to hear its voices of want, faith,
penitence, love, trust, and hope. As the heart speaks so He
hears and responds.

In my prayers, am I *fervent*? Do I really feel what I say?
Do I address myself to God with a deep sense of my unworthi-
ness, and my dependence upon Him? Do I pray in the Holy
Ghost and in the name of the Lord Jesus, expecting to be heard
for His sake, and to be answered according to the will of God,
through Him? Do I feel the high privilege given me, as a
creature of dust and as a sinner, in being permitted to speak to
the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity? Do I pray
for others as well as for myself?

Blessed Lord! Pity my infirmities in prayer. Help my
unbelief. Answer me not as I deserve, nor even as I ask, but
fulfil Thy own pleasure. Not my will, but Thine be done!

THERE is a power which man can wield When mortal aid is vain,
God's eye, and arm, and love to reach, God's listening ear to gain.
That power is prayer, which soars on high, Through Jesus to the throne,
And moves the hand which moves the world To bring the blessing down.

November 5th.

AM I solemnly conscious of how near I may go to heaven, and yet not enter in?

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.—Mark xii. 34.

The kingdom of God is come near to you.—Matt. xii. 28.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.—Acts xxvi. 28.

A CHRISTIAN minister says, "When, after safely circumnavigating the globe, *The Royal Charter* went to pieces in Moelfra Bay, on the coast of Wales, it was my melancholy duty to visit and seek to comfort the wife of the first officer, made by that calamity a widow. The ship had been telegraphed from Queenstown, and the lady was sitting in the parlour expecting her husband, with the table spread for his evening meal, when the messenger came to tell her he was drowned. Never can I forget the grief, so stricken and tearless, with which she wrung my hand, as she said, 'So near home, and yet lost!'"

Alas! is not this a picture of very many, who, after sailing over life's sea, find themselves wrecked almost within sound of the chiming bells of the new Jerusalem? So it was with the five virgins, who came so near as to knock at the door and hear the voice from within saying, "I know you not." So it was with Bunyan's pilgrim "Ignorance." He came up to the very gates, but being without his "certificate," was thrust down into the deeps below, "Then I saw," says Bunyan, "that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction."

May I not make one of this number! God forbid that I should deceive myself with only the Christian profession, kept up in nothing but a perfunctory routine of rites and ceremonies. Shall I think that if *I do these things*, with a "few charities," I shall be saved at last? Shall I, when life closes on me, find myself near the kingdom, but without the "certificate" of admission; almost saved, but altogether lost?

O, my God, I beseech Thee for Jesu's sake put me right if I am wrong. If I am now only *half* a Christian, make me one *entirely*. Give me the witness of Thy Spirit that I am one of Thy children. Let me carry *this* certificate all through my pilgrimage, and have it safe in my bosom at the last.

BUT if you still His call refuse,
And all His wondrous love abuse,
Soon will He sadly from you turn,
Your bitter prayer for pardon spurn;
"Too late, too late!" will be your cry,
Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.

November 6th.

WHILE I am attentive to the various devotional exercises of religion, am I as attentive to active service for Christ?—

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.—Isa. vi. 1, 2.

THE life of a nun or a monk, whatever may be its regularity and fulness in devotional exercises, is too one-sided to be acceptable to God. We are not to be Essenes nor Pharisees, but Christ-like. He had His seasons of prayer, praise, and meditation, but He nevertheless went about doing good. In the loneliness of the garden He wrestled in agonizing prayer, and on the cross He publicly died for a sinful world.

The seraph in Isaiah's vision has wings with which he covers his face and feet in adoration before the throne, but he has wings also with which to fly on Jehovah's errands. The angels are worshipping spirits in God's presence, but they are His servants to do His pleasure. Gabriel descends to a lowly home to salute Mary, the mother of Jesus. Another at regular intervals comes to the pool of Bethesda to give to its waters some healing power. Another rolls back the stone from the mouth of the Saviour's grave, gives terror to the Roman soldiers and comfort to the weeping Marys. Another enters a prison and gives liberty to Peter. Another appears to Paul in a storm, assuring him of safety. Another tells Cornelius that his prayers and alms are accepted of God.

Thus, while these spirits "bright and fair" are consecrated to devotion, they are also consecrated to active service. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

I would have my devotions be to me as a labourer's food and rest—preparation for further work; or as oil supplied to a lamp; or as whetting a scythe for the harvest. I would enter my closet and pray to my Father Who seeth in secret; but go work in His vineyard. I would wait on the Lord and renew my strength, but use the strength to do His will in active service.

O Lord, I would be as devotional as a seraph, yet as zealous to do Thy will with "both hands earnestly."

THY will by me on earth be done, as by the choirs above
Who always see Thee on Thy throne, and glory in Thy love!
I ask in confidence the grace that I may do Thy will,
As angels who behold Thy face, and all Thy words fulfil.

November 7th.

IN the midst of all the discouragements of life, do I encourage myself in the Lord my God?—

But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.—1 Sam. xxx. 6.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.—Ps. lvi. 3, 4, 11.

DAVID and his men returned to Ziklag, and found that during their absence the Amalekites had come and taken away their wives, and sons and daughters, and burnt the town into ashes. As they looked on the scene they wept, “until they had no more power to weep.” David’s wives were among the captives. David was greatly distressed, “for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; *but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*”

I can never be in such circumstances as David was; but I may at some time or other be “greatly distressed” by reason of doubts, or fears, or afflictions, or losses, or persecutions, or difficulties, or failures, or treacheries.

If I ever am so situated as to *feel* as David felt, I will learn from his example, to encourage myself in the Lord my God. I will not look to myself. Nothing but weakness and infidelity there. I will not look to my associates, they may be in as bad a state as I am. I will not look to the world, that is selfish and cares little for anyone but itself. I will abstract my mind from all earthly reliances, and think only of God, my Father; His love, His care, His sympathy, His faithfulness, and His help rendered in seasons gone by. As I think of these things I will take courage. I will face my difficulties and distresses. In His strength I will contend with them and conquer. If God be for me, who can be against me? No weapon formed against me can prosper with Him on my side.

I will wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He will strengthen my heart. “I will gird up the loins of my mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto me at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” If hell is nigh, God is nigher, circling me with hosts of fire. Victory! through the blood of the Lamb!

O God, in Thee do I trust, let not my enemies triumph over me.

THE storm may rage without me, my heart may low be laid,

But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?

Wherever he may guide me, no want shall turn me back;

My Shepherd is beside me, and nothing can I lack.

His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim;

He knows the way He taketh, and I will trust in Him.

November 8th.

AM I living in the settled assurance that while child-like I trust in my Heavenly Father's guidance and protection, He will suffer no harm to befall me?—

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.—Ps. cxii. 7.

Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king.—Dan. iii. 17.

The Lord shall be thy confidence, and keep thy foot from being taken.—Prov. iii. 26.

NOTHING is more certain than God's protection of His people when they trust in Him with all their heart. Job trusted God absolutely, and He set a "hedge" about him which the craft and power of his enemies could neither cut down, nor break through. Because Daniel trusted in Him, He shut the lions' mouths, and saved him from their power. So the Three Children from the power of the fiery furnace.

The eternal God is the refuge of His saints, and underneath them are the "everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27). "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come near thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Ps. xci. 9-11).

During a sudden freshet, a labouring man and his child, living in a cottage that stood by itself, were obliged to walk at midnight for more than a mile through water rising to the little boy's waist before they could reach a place of safety.

After they had changed their clothes, and began to feel comfortable, the friend in whose cottage they had found shelter said to the little boy, "And wasn't you afraid while walking through the water?" "No, not at all," said the little fellow, who was but seven years old, "I was walking along with father, you know. And I knew he wouldn't let the water drown me." This was simple but beautiful! If, like Enoch, I walk with God, let me remember that I walk with my heavenly Father. And He promises, "When thou passest through the waters, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. xliii. 2). Will not He do as He has said?

I would fain be as a little child, trusting in God at all times, and enjoying the assurance that He will never leave me in trouble to sink.

"When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

HE that hath made his refuge God
Shall find a most secure abode,
Shall walk all day beneath His shade,
And there at night shall rest his head.

November 9th.

AS a father or mother do I conscientiously endeavour to train my children in the way in which they should go?—

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Eph. vi. 4.

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest: yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.—Prov. xix. 18.

These words which I command thee . . . shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.—Deut. vi. 6.

I know him (Abraham) that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.—Gen. xviii. 19

PARENTAL home-training of children is more important than any other training which they can possibly receive. Scripture seems to recognize no other than this. It places all responsibility of the training of children upon parents, as though there was responsibility on no one else. Parents may send their children to day or to Sunday-schools, or to any other schools, but they cannot thereby send *their* parental responsibility with them. There is no such thing as proxy here. Every father or mother must bear his or her own burden.

To learn the responsibility of parents as regards the home-training of their children, we must read what God says, who is the Author of the family relationships, and Who, of course, is perfect in knowledge on the subject.

The moral and religious training of children is the specific work of parents, according to the Bible. The elements or principles of that training are given by God. He says in plain words to parents, that they shall teach His precepts to their children diligently, and shall talk of them "when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut vi. 7). The passages quoted at the top of this page are deserving of most serious consideration by parents as to the subjects and methods of training their children at home in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Were this training attended to, how differently would children grow up in social and family life!

My God, and the God of my children, help me like Abraham, so to train them that they "shall keep the way of the Lord" all their days.

SHALL I, through indolence supine,
Neglect, betray, my charge divine,
My delegated power?

The souls I from my Lord receive,
Of each I an account must give,
At that tremendous hour.

November 10th.

DO I devoutly and constantly love the word of God, and meditate upon it?—

O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Consider how I love Thy precepts. I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. Great peace have they that love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.—Ps. cxix. 97, 103, 159, 165.

IT is possible to read the Holy Scriptures with great regularity every day, and yet not be much edified. On the other hand one may read but little and meditate much upon that little, and be greatly profited. A small quantity of wholesome food, well digested, is better for the body than an abundance ill-digested. So as regards meditation on appropriate texts.

The following incident will illustrate this:—

“Where have you been reading this morning,” inquired a little boy of his uncle, who was a Scotchman.

“Weel, Sandy,” said the old man, “I hae been getting a wonderful feast yesterday and to-day, out of the last two verses of the eighth chapter of Romans.”

“And haven’t you read any more than those two verses in two days?” asked Sandy in surprise.

“Oh, you see, Sandy,” said the old man, “there’s a mine of golden treasure in these verses, and I’ve been trying to dig down to the bottom of it. I’ve been doing wi’ these verses as I do wi’ the sugar-plums your Aunt Mary makes me, when I’ve a sore throat. Now and then she puts one of them in her mouth. But she jist gies it a chew or twa, and then it’s done with. But I lay mine in my cheek, and let it lie, and slowly melt away, and do me good for half a day.”

“And there’s jist the same difference in the way folks use God’s blessed word. Some gallop through a chapter, and turn away and forget it. But that’s nae my way. I like to tak’ a sweet, wee bit of a verse, and do wi’ it just as I do wi’ the sugar-plums. I let it lie in my soul, as the plums do in my mouth, and melt slowly away; and so it fills my soul wi’ sweetness, for a day, or a week, or a month at a time.”

O Lord, open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things in Thy law. While some are disputing about the *shell* of Thy Word, may I feed on its *kernel*. While others are quibbling about its *letter*, may I drink in its spirit.

O MAY these hallowed pages be my joy by day and night;
And still new beauties may I see, and still increasing light.
Divine Instructor, gracious Lord, O grant my fervent prayer;
Teach me to love Thy sacred word, and view my Saviour there.

November 11th.

AM I sufficiently considerate of others in my words and deeds?—

Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. — Heb. x. 24.

Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. — 1 Jno. iii. 18.

HOW many unkind words are spoken in company and to individuals, which would not be if consideration was exercised as to their nature and consequences. Consider one another's weaknesses, peculiarities, dangers, temptations, failings, wants: and let these respectively influence our words, tempers, and conduct. In how many little things we may show brotherly consideration!

One day the poet Longfellow was seen to be cutting something from a newspaper, and being asked by an intimate friend what he was doing, he replied, "Oh! here is a paragraph speaking kindly of our poor old friend Blank: you know he seldom gets a word of praise, poor fellow, now-a-days, and thinking he might not chance to see this paper, I am snipping out the paragraph to mail to him this afternoon. I know that even these few lines of recognition will make him happy for hours, and I could not bear to think he might perhaps miss seeing these pleasant words so kindly expressed."

Whenever George Moore had an archbishop staying with him at his country house, he invited the clergy and curates far and near to visit him. On these occasions the lawn was covered with black coats. The clergymen were introduced to the archbishop one by one. None were forgotten. If any curate was shy, and slunk away into a corner, George would find him out. He would take him by the arm, and bring him forward, saying, "I want to introduce my friend the Reverend Mr. So and So"—sometimes adding, "Who knows but that he may be an archbishop some day?"

O, how much Christian society would be saved from bickerings, heart-burnings, and sorrows, if consideration was more frequently exercised!

May I endeavour in my future intercourse with Christ's people to practice this grace, and avoid giving unnecessary pain or provocation to anyone.

THEN let us ever bear
The blessed end in view,
And join with mutual care,
To fight our passage through;
And kindly help each other on,
Till all receive the starry crown.

November 12th.

I F, by wicked purpose, I have kept back or taken from another, that which was not mine, have I in the fear of God, restored it again?—

And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.—Luke xix. 8, 9.

I HAVE read an old narrative to the effect, that a man was once walking a solitary way when an angel in the form of a man joined him. They came to a deep valley in which was a pit burning with fire and brimstone. In this pit were three gibbets. On one of them hung a man by his tongue; on the second a man by his hands; on the third no one hung. The man amazed at such a sight, asked the angel what it meant. The angel replied, that the one hanging by his tongue was his grandfather who had obtained the land on which he lived by lying and perjury; that the one hanging by his hands was his own father, who kept with a strong hand what his grandfather obtained; that the third gibbet was for him unless he made restitution. The angel now vanished. The man made his way home. The next day he sent for the true owners and restored the whole to them. His wife and children were distressed at his conduct, and said, he would make them all beggars. He said to them, "It is better to beg a little while in this world, than to burn for ever in the world to come; better to lose house and lands here, than to be deprived of God and heaven hereafter."

This may be only a story, but the moral is true. Anything acquired in this life; be it little or much, by extortion, perjury, short weights or measures, by the mean tricks of trade, if not visited with retribution in this world, are sure to meet with it in the other, unless arrested by righteous restitution. I knew one who, having kept back a halfpenny from another, had no rest until he restored it to him through the post. Another, who wronged his customer out of five shillings, and fifty years afterwards restored it with interest.

O, God of righteousness, help me that I may be strictly honest and true in all my dealings, so that I may at the last not fear Thy judgment upon my life conduct.

NEVER, for lucre, or laurels,
Or custom, though such should be rife,
Adapting the smaller morals
To measure the larger life.

November 13th.

DO I enjoy the assurance of faith as to my interest in Christ and in heavenly things?—

For the which cause I suffer these things: nevertheless, I am not ashamed: For I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.—2 Tim. i. 12.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—2 Cor. v. 1.

AN intelligent assurance of trust in Christ and of an interest in the riches of His grace, coming from personal *experience* is of the highest possible value to the dying Christian. Life nor death can rob him of it. It is sweet as angels' food, and precious as Jesus Himself.

When Dr. James W. Alexander was dying, his wife sought to comfort him by quoting the words of the Apostle Paul:—"I know in whom I have believed." Dr. Alexander at once corrected her by saying, "Not *in* whom I have believed; but 'I know *whom* I have believed.'" He would not even suffer a little preposition to come between his soul and his Saviour.

Donald Cargill, on the scaffold, July 27th, 1681, as he handed his well-used Bible to one of his friends that stood near, gave this testimony: "I bless the Lord that these thirty years and more I have been at peace with God, and was never shaken loose of it. And now I am as sure of my interest in Christ, and peace with God, as all within this Bible and the Spirit of God can make me. And I am no more terrified at death, or afraid of hell because of sin, than if I had never had sin: for all my sins are freely pardoned and washed thoroughly away through the precious blood and intercession of Jesus Christ."

Tell me, O ye "wise and prudent" of this world, what ye can offer to excel, or even to equal, this sublime experience? When your knowledge shall vanish away, will ye have the assurance, "I know Whom I have believed, &c.?"

Blessed Jesus, I know Thee not as a philosopher, as a statesman, as a science, or as a system of theology, but as an Almighty Saviour, and am persuaded Thou wilt never leave or forsake me!

FAITH, Hope, and Love were questioned what they thought

Of future glory, which religion taught:

Now Faith believed it firmly to be true,

And Hope expected so to find it, too:

Love answered, smiling, with a conscious glow,

"Believe? Expect? I *know* it to be so!"

November 14th.

AM I walking in Christ as my Way of life?—

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.—John xiv. 6.

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.—Col. ii. 6.

JESUS says of Himself, "I am the way." Paul says, "Walk ye in Him." Without life there can be no natural walking, whatever else there may be; so there can be no walking in Christ, without *the life of the Spirit of God*. Nothing can be a substitute for this. To walk in Christ, with the life of the Spirit, we need to know Him as the *Way*; to know *how* to walk, and *whither* we have to walk. Walking in Christ also implies exercise and progress in Him. There are different kinds of walking which have their analogies in Christian walking; viz., uprightly, carelessly, stoopingly, joyously, sorrowfully, hope-fully, constantly, anticipatively. Walking in Christ, we should walk in His light, in His love, in His righteousness.

Jesus as a Way, is the "King's Highway," in which all grades and classes may walk with equal freedom; in which there are no tolls, taxes, or imposts. All one has to do is to *walk in Him*. He will keep us so circumspectly that we shall not turn to the right or the left. He will lead us to the Father, and to the Father's house.

Walking in Christ as the Way, I shall walk safely, holily, and usefully, I shall walk as he walked, I shall show plainly that I walk not in the way of the world, of self, or of the church, though I may be a member therein. I shall walk in the Way the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, and the holy of all ages walked. My life may not be always one of ease or plenty, as Christ's was not. On the contrary because I walk in Him, like Him, I may have the severer tests of Satan, the hotter persecutions of the world, the more fiery opposition of formalism. I may, even, have to surrender all in life for Him, and crown that life with a crucifixion from the spirit of envy and malice. What matters if the servant is as his Lord? So much more honour to the servant.

Lord Jesus, all I ask is that I may now so walk in Thee, that I may walk *with* Thee in "the white robe" of heavenly purity and love.

O MAY I walk in Christ my Lord, my sure unerring Way,
Live by the teachings of His word; on Him my burdens lay,
If in His steps I follow on, and mark where'er He go,
He will exalt me to His throne, and all His glory show.

November 15th.

IF I have forsaken the Lord, why have I done so?—

O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?—Jer. ii. 31.

Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.—Deut. xxxii. 15.

IF one who has been my attached friend for months or years, suddenly or gradually turns from me and ceases to recognise me, it would be natural for me to inquire, "What have I done to you? What have you seen in me, to make this change in your conduct towards me? Have I shown coldness, an evil spirit, or acted in any way different to my wont?"

Thus it is with God. He asks of those who were once His friends and people, but have forsaken Him, "O generation, see ye the word of the Lord: Have I been a wilderness unto you and a land of darkness," that you have gone from me? Have you found nothing in Me but dreariness, loneliness, fruitlessness, dangers, melancholy? See your own heart, and learn from that whether I have been a wilderness and a land of darkness to you. If I have, I have been contrary to My word. If I have not, and you have *seen* me as such, it is your doubts, fears, unbelief, that have seen Me so. I, the Lord, change not. If you once saw Me as My word describes Me, I am that now. See ye the word of the Lord. Does not that speak of Me as a sun and shield, giving grace and glory? As leading My people into green pastures and by the side of still waters, spreading a table before them in the wilderness, filling their cup and anointing their heads? As the God of all grace, consolation, comfort, and peace? As your Father, giving you all good things to enjoy? Then, why have you forsaken Me? I have *not* been a wilderness and a land of darkness to you."

No, my Lord, Thou hast not. I bear witness that Thou hast been all Thy word says Thou hast. Yet, have I not too frequently forsaken Thee? Have I not again and again left the manna from heaven for the flesh pots of Egypt? Gracious God I once more return to Thee! Heal my backslidings.

O WHY should I forsake the Lord?
Has He withdrawn His help from me?
Has He kept back His light and love,
And left me in my misery?
'Tis my wayward, wicked heart,
That leads me from my God to stray,
As 'tis the clouds that hide the sun,
And keep back half the light of day.

November 16th.

ALTHOUGH *my portion in the things of this world may be small have I in God a portion that more than compensates?—*

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.—Ps. xvi. 5, 6.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.—Sam. iii. 24.

I DO not value *my* wealth by the property and money that I own. That may be how a worldling estimates his worth. *My wealth* is God. Having Him, I have all things; without Him I have nothing.

Some time ago, a young minister took charge of a small church in a country town in the State of New York.

On going round to visit the members of his congregation, he was asked to call and see an aged widow who was blind. On stopping at the door of her cottage, he heard some one speaking in a low voice. He found it was the voice of prayer. He waited till the prayer was ended. Then he went in, and made himself known to the widow. "How are you, my good friend?" was his first inquiry.

With tears, she said, "Thank God, I am very well."

After talking with her a while, he asked if there was anything he could do for her. She said if he could send her a loaf of bread she would feel much obliged, for she added, "We have not had a morsel of solid food in the house for three days."

"Why, my friend," asked the minister, "how is it that you are alive?"

"God is very good to the poor," she said. "The woods are full of huckleberries, and my two little grandchildren gather them. Our cow gives us milk; so we have milk and huckleberries; and *we have God too.*"

"We have God too!" I may have "little or nothing" of this world's goods, but if I have God, He is guarantee that my "cruise of oil and barrel of meal shall not fail." I do not miss the moon when I have the sun. If the Sovereign is with me, why should I trouble about my needs in His presence?

O God, let me feel that I have Thee, and I shall feel that in Thee I have all things.

GIVE what Thou canst; without Thee I am poor,
And *with Thee rich*; take what Thou wilt away.

November 17th.

A M *I resting on Christ alone for salvation?—*

I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ profiteth you nothing.—Gal. v. 2.

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”—Gal. iii. 10.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. v. 1.

PAUL had taught the Galatians that their salvation was simply and only by faith in Jesus Christ. Teachers, believing in Judaism and Christianity, had come amongst them and taught them that it was as necessary for them to be circumcised as to believe in Christ, in order to be saved. Paul says to them, “If ye be circumcised, Christ profiteth you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law. Ye are fallen away from grace.”

Are there not teachers in these days, who, like those Judaizing teachers among the Galatians, teach, that Christians to be saved must be baptized by a “holy priest;” they must eat the “body and blood of Christ,” made such by a similar priest, out of bread and wine; they must receive the Holy Spirit at the hands of a bishop; they must belong to the church, that is, *their* church; with other things of a sacerdotal and ritual kind?

Now, if I have believed in Jesus Christ, and He has brought me into a state of salvation, is not that enough? What more do I require? If I am saved, what do I need with the sacraments, the church, the priest, *to save me*? Should I be persuaded to connect these with faith in Christ *as necessary to my salvation*? Should I not thereby confess that Christ had not saved me? Should I not confess that Jesus was incompetent to save me alone? In a word, should I not be “fallen from grace?” Should I not take myself from under grace and put myself under law, and failing to fulfil *all* its requirements, should I not be “cursed?”

O God, open the eyes of all such teachers as connect any ordinance or any man with Thy grace as necessary to salvation. Show them how they are “the enemies of the cross of Christ,” and the enemies of Thy people. Give me strength to resist their dangerous teachings, and to follow Thee ONLY.

O THER knowledge I disdain, 'tis all but vanity :
Christ, the Lamb of God, was slain, He tasted death for me,
Me to save from endless woe, the sin-atoning Victim died :
Only Jesus will I know, and Jesus crucified.

November 18th.

IF I feel indebted to a man for kindness, how much more should I feel indebted to Jesus?—

Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to Christ: Verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.—Mark ix. 41.

When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. v. 6, 8.

KINDNESS for kindness is a law not altogether obliterated from human nature.

In one of the battles in Virginia, during the late American war, a Union officer fell, severely wounded, in front of the Confederate breastworks. He lay there crying piteously for water. A noble-hearted Confederate soldier heard his cry, and resolved to relieve him. He filled his canteen with water, and though the bullets were flying across the field, and he could only go at the risk of his life, yet he went. He gave the suffering officer the drink he so greatly needed. This touched his heart so much, that he instantly took out his gold watch, and offered it to his generous foe. But the noble fellow refused to take it.

"Then give me your name and residence," said the officer.

"My name," said the soldier, "is James Moore, of Burke County, North Carolina."

This soldier was subsequently wounded, and lost a limb. In due time the war was over, and the wounded officer went back to his business as a merchant in New York. Not long after, the Confederate soldier received a letter from him, telling him that he had settled on him 10,000 dollars, to be paid in four annual instalments of 2,500 dollars each. 10,000 dollars for a drink of water! That was noble on the part of the Union officer. But to give that drink of water at the risk of his own life, was still more noble on the part of that brave soldier.

What return have I made to Jesus for His coming to me to give me the cup of salvation, not to relieve my physical thirst, but to deliver me from the "bitter pains of eternal death"? He trod the winepress of Divine wrath alone for me. Of the people there was none to save; His own arm brought salvation to me. What owe I my Lord for this? How can I pay the mighty debt I owe?

O LET me kiss Thy bleeding feet,
And bathe and wash them with my tears!
The story of Thy love repeat
In every drooping sinner's ears,
That all may hear the quickening sound,
Since I, even I, have mercy found.

November 19th.

*A*M I ever guilty of the sin of murmuring against God?—

Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.—1 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

MURMURING is a fretful and worrying disposition. It makes its subjects miserable and those that are around them.

"God hath much ado with us," says Bishop Hall. "Either we lack health, or quietness, or children, or wealth, or company, or ourselves in all these. It is a wonder the Israelites found not fault with the want of sauce to their quails, or with their old clothes, or their solitary way. Nature is moderate in her desires; but conceit is insatiable."

"Murmuring," says Thomas Watson, "is a quarrelling with God, and inveighing against Him. 'They spake against God' (Num. xxi. 5). The murmurer saith interpretatively that God hath not dealt well with him, and that he hath deserved better from Him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly. This is the language, or rather blasphemy, of a murmuring spirit,—God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The Israelites are called in the same text "murmurers" and "rebels" (Num. xvii. 10); and is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? (1 Sam. xv. 23). Thou that art a murmurer art in the account of God as a witch, a sorcerer, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude. Murmuring often ends in cursing: Micah's mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away (Judges xvii. 2). So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away. Our murmuring is the devil's music; this is that sin which God cannot bear: 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me?' (Num. xiv. 27). It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land-destroying sin: 'Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer' (1 Cor. x. 10)."

I will watch myself lest I fall into this evil habit. The effectual remedy against it is, to "bless the Lord at all times."

O God, forgive me wherein I have been guilty of murmuring. Help me to see in everything an occasion of thankfulness and "rejoice evermore."

WHY should I murmur at my lot forlorn?

The self-same Lord that doomed me to be poor,
Endues me with a spirit to endure
All, and much more than is, or has been, borne
By better men, of want and worldly scorn.

November 18th.

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MURMURING is a fretful and worrying disposition. It makes its subjects miserable and those that are around them.

“God hath much ado with us,” says Bishop Hall. “Either we lack health, or quietness, or children, or wealth, or company, or ourselves in all these. It is a wonder the Israelites found not fault with the want of sauce to their quails, or with their old clothes, or their solitary way. Nature is moderate in her desires; but conceit is insatiable.”

“Murmuring,” says Thomas Watson, “is a quarrelling with God, and inveighing against Him. ‘They spake against God’ (Num. xxi. 5). The murmurer saith interpretatively that God hath not dealt well with him, and that he hath deserved better from Him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly. This is the language, or rather blasphemy, of a murmuring spirit,—God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The Israelites are called in the same text “murmurers” and “rebels” (Num. xvii. 10); and is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? (1 Sam. xv. 23). Thou that art a murmurer art in the account of God as a witch, a sorcerer, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude. Murmuring often ends in cursing: Micah’s mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away (Judges xvii. 2). So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away. Our murmuring is the devil’s music; this is that sin which God cannot bear: ‘How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me?’ (Num. xiv. 27). It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land-destroying sin: ‘Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer’ (1 Cor. x. 10).”

I will watch myself lest I fall into this evil habit. The effectual remedy against it is, to “bless the Lord at all times.”

O God, forgive me wherein I have been guilty of murmuring. Help me to see in everything an occasion of thankfulness and “rejoice evermore.”

WHY should I murmur at my lot forlorn?
The self-same Lord that doomed me to be poor,
Endues me with a spirit to endure
All, and much more than is, or has been, borne
By better men, of want and worldly scorn.

November 20th.

A PAGAN philosopher gave as a precept to his disciples, "Think within yourself upon all occasions, 'I am a philosopher'": how much more ought I to remember on all occasions, "I am a Christian?"—

Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. vi. 11.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am except these bonds.—Acts xxvi. 28, 29.

THE Rev. Alfred Cookman on a certain occasion appeared on the platform of the Philadelphia Young Men's Christian Association. He introduced himself in the following words:—"Ecclesiastical history tells us of one of the ancient Christians who, when summoned before the tribunal where he was to receive his sentence of death, was asked, 'What is thy name?' He immediately responded, 'I am a Christian.' 'What is thy occupation?' He answered, 'I am a Christian.' 'What is thy native country?' He answered, 'I am a Christian.' 'Who were thy ancestors?' He still replied, 'I am a Christian.' To all the inquiries proposed to him, he answered, 'I am a Christian.' Sir, it is with a feeling akin to this that I appear upon your platform to-night—not as an American, not as a Methodist, not as a Sectarian—I am a Christian. I glory in this worthy distinction; and in presence of men and angels I announce the fact, 'I am a Christian.'"

To be a Christian—one *after the Spirit of Christ*—is greater than being a citizen of the greatest empire of earth, or a member of the 'Universal Church,' or a denominationalist of any kind, or a philosopher, or a scientist, or a statesman. Inasmuch as Christ in all things has the pre-eminence, to be like Him, is to occupy pre-eminence with Him. A Christian is the highest style of man.

May I always remember my new nature and relationship—holy—a son of God—a Christian—a follower of Christ. As a loyal Englishman is never ashamed of his name, his country, or his queen, *wherever he is*, so may I, as a true disciple of Jesus, never be ashamed to own my Lord, or to acknowledge myself to have His name. But may I take care that I have His Spirit within me, by whose name I am called.

YE different sects, who all declare,
"Lo, here is Christ!" or, "Christ is there!"
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show us how true Christians live.

November 21st.

WHY should I be anxious to "get on in the world," to have riches, or an abundance of the things of this life?—

O fear the Lord, ye His saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—Ps. xxxi. 9, 10.

WERE I as rich as the richest man on the face of the earth, I could only live as the poorest; viz., by keeping up the round of life until the end came. True, I might carry myself more pompously in appearances, and more indulgently in the lusts of the flesh. But after all, it would be nothing more than going the round. In all probability such indulgences would rob me of purity, a good conscience, and a hope of heaven—blessings infinitely more valuable than all the things of earth which the heart could desire. With these in his soul a Lazarus is rich enough to be escorted to paradise by a convoy of angels. Without these a Dives in his palace, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, is poor enough to die, and "in hell to lift up his eyes, being in torments." Luke xvi.

Then why should I be anxious "to get on in life," as the phrase is understood? If I get on in the way of the world, shall I not go back in the way of Christ, as a man walking towards the north necessarily leaves the south behind him? Shall I do this unless I esteem the world more than heaven? Shall I sell my birthright for a mess of pottage? Shall I, in order to "get on in life," get off my fidelity in the use of the private and social means of religion? Shall I make a venture after that which fools may get without any merit, and lose a certainty which will give me a crown? Why should I be more diligent in acquiring riches than in acquiring treasures of wisdom and holiness? I know the cunning of the old serpent: he tells me, "others strive and struggle to 'get on in life,' why not you? Is it not your duty to your family? Would you not have more money to dispose of in beneficence? Cannot you serve God in business? Why should you be less attentive to religion in striving to be rich?" Now all these are questions, which if I heed, will blind me to the primary importance of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Whilst "getting on in life" I shall be going on towards death, and ere I have obtained my fill of wealth I shall be empty of God and shut out of heaven.

THE soul that fixes upon earth unsatisfied desires,
Forgetful of its heavenly birth, and what that birth inspires;
That soul shall mourn itself too late, its wingéd nature gone,
Degraded from its higher state to that it feeds upon.

November 22nd.

DO I believe and feel that my only safety against the punishment of my sins is the blood of the Lamb?—

Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.—John i. 29.

Elect . . . unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.—1 Peter i. 2.

We are come to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—Heb. xii. 24.

THE moralist shelters himself under his moral living, the Pharisee under his alms, fasts, and long prayers. I, like the Israelites in Egypt, would hide myself against the avenging angel, under the blood of "our Passover slain for us."

The Jews tell a story illustrative of this in connection with that dreadful night in their history. A Jewish father had one little girl, about ten years old. She was his only child, and he was very fond of her. As the first-born child in that family, she would be the one to die, if the angel's stroke should fall on their dwelling. Before going to sleep, she asked her father if the blood had been sprinkled on their doorposts. He said it had, and she fell asleep. But her sleep was disturbed. She awoke several times through the evening, and each time she asked anxiously if it was all right about the blood. Assured that it was, she tried to sleep on, but in vain. A little while before midnight she woke again, in great alarm. She asked her father to take her in his arms, and carry her to the door, that she might see the blood for herself. He did so; but found, to his horror, that there was *no blood on the doorposts!* It had been left to a servant to attend to it, and he had neglected it. Her father ran to get the blood, and then sprinkled it on the doorposts with his own hand. His dear child saw the blood there. Then she knew they were safe; and she went sweetly to sleep. The blood protected them when the destroying angel passed over.

May I never be at rest in my experience or life until I see the "blood of sprinkling;" nay, not until I *feel* it sprinkled upon my conscience to cleanse me from dead works, that I may serve the living God! Then shall I realize peace with God. Then shall I feel secure amidst all the visitations of God. "Evil shall slay the wicked, but he who is under the protection of the 'blood of sprinkling,' mercy shall compass him about."

FOR ever here my rest shall be, close to Thy bleeding side;

This all my hope, and all my plea for me the Saviour died!

My dying Saviour and my God, Fountain for guilt and sin,

Sprinkle me ever with Thy blood, and cleanse, and keep me clean.

November 23rd.

WHILST I see the importance of faith, do I also see its simplicity?—

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.—Heb. xi. 1, 6.

THE very simplicity of faith has been the occasion of much mystery in its explanation. Divines have shown more difficulty in explaining it than many of the poor and uneducated have in realizing it.

The Rev. Dr. Spencer, of New York, once visited an afflicted member of his church. He said to her,

"Mrs. M——, you seem to be very sick?"

"Yes," she said, "I am dying."

"And are you ready to die?"

She replied in calm and firm words, "Sir, God knows—I have taken Him—at His word—and—I am not afraid—to die."

What simpler and yet sublimer definition of faith could be given—"I have taken Him at His word?"

There was once a good woman who was well known among her circle for her simple faith, and her great calmness in the midst of many trials. Another woman, living at a distance, hearing of her, said, "I must go and see her, and learn the secret of her holy, happy life." She went; and accosting her, said, "Are you the woman with the great faith?" "No," replied she, "I am not; but I am the woman with a little faith in the great God."

If faith is such a simple thing as taking God at His word, this will explain how it is that unbelief is such a great sin.

A young man, in the seventeenth century, being in deep distress of mind, applied to Dr. Goodwin for advice and consolation. After he had laid before him the long and black list of sins that troubled his conscience, the doctor reminded him that there was one blacker still, which he had not named. "What can that be, sir?" he despondingly asked. "The sin," replied the doctor, "I refer to is that of refusing to believe in Christ Jesus as a Saviour." This simple word banished the anxious one's guilty fears.

O Lord, I do believe, help Thou my unbelief!

FAITH is the Spirit's sweet control, from which assurance springs,
Faith is the pencil of the soul, that pictures heavenly things,
Faith is the conqu'ring host that storms the battlements of sin,
Faith is the quick'ning fire that warms the trembling heart within.

November 24th.

WHILE I hate pride in others, do I possess it in myself?—

Only by pride cometh contention.—Prov. xiii. 10.

Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.—Prov. xvi. 18.

A man's pride shall bring him low.—Prov. xxix. 23.

Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke xviii. 14.

God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.—1 Peter v. 5.

PRIDE is an offspring of Satan ; so, as his offspring, he feeds it, clothes it, guards it, strengthens it. He receives its honours of worship and obedience. Seen in anyone or anywhere it is repulsive to true greatness and goodness. It is an evil which may be attached to almost everything. A man may be proud of his person, of his looks, of his education, of his dress, of his ancestry, of his powers, of his riches, of his associates.

Pride in worldlings is only natural ; but pride in a Christian is as one of the Canaanites left in Canaan after it was conquered for the Lord—a trap, a snare, a scourge, and a thorn. Joshua xxi. 13. It lives only by sufferance. It is out of harmony with the word and spirit of Christ. It is a parasite eating away the vitals of the Christian life. It distorts and spoils the beauty of his character. It weakens his power both with God and man.

For a Christian to be proud of any secular possessions, as above named, is most incongruous. But for him to be proud of his church, of his religion, of his prayers, of his good works, is as inconsistent in him as it was in the Jewish Pharisee. How repulsive that was to Christ, and how He denounced it, we know.

What have I, as a Christian, or as a man, that I have not received ? Now, if I have received it, why should I be proud as though I had not received it ? Where is there room for me to be proud any more than there is for an angel ? If the Infinitely-Holy, All-Sufficient, and All-Possessing-One humbles Himself, as He does, to look on me and to abide with me, shall I lift myself above the lowest and weakest of my brethren ? Even were I one of the most mature in Divine grace, it would become me like the ripest ears of wheat to bow my head in humility. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

O Thou, the Greatest of all, yet the Servant of all, may I look upon my highest place to be the footstool of Thy Throne !

HE that is down need fear no fall ;
He that is low no pride :
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

November 25th.

I*S my religion one of custom, times and seasons, means and ordinances; or is it one of principle which abides with me and in me, as life itself?—*

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.—Gal. iv. 10, 11.

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.—Gal. v. 2, 4.

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.—Gal. iii. 10.

Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.—Phil. ii. 12.

THE religion of Jesus Christ is *the life of God in the soul*, breathed into it by the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said of physical life, "A man's life consisteth not of the abundance of things he possesseth"; so, it may be said, a Christian's life consisteth not of the abundance of means that he possesseth. There are some men who eat, drink, dress, keep company, and indulge in all kinds of pleasure on every available occasion, as though these were life, or necessary to life. So, there are professors of religion who indulge in analogous things in the churches, as though *they* were their spiritual life, and it could not exist without them. I have recently read a volume in which I counted *twenty-one Feast days* to be observed by members of the Church of England during the year, besides those of the Sabbath; and the Vigils, Fasts, and days of abstinence to be observed during the year, *one hundred and twelve*.

Is it not to be feared that they who mind these things, do so with the belief that their religion consists in them; and that as they fail in them, they fail in religion, and so on the contrary?

I thank God that I have not so read my Bible, nor learned of Christ, as to believe that the Christian religion consists in those things. The religion of Jesus is to me what *He* has made it, and not what the "church" or her "priests" have made it. His religion to me is *life* received direct from Him, maintained by His indwelling Spirit of grace and truth. I want not so many fasts or feasts to *keep* me a Christian: Jesus says, "Abide in Me and I in you." "My grace is sufficient for thee." His grace I can have for asking at the throne of grace at any time without human priest intervening. He gives more grace, and gives liberally to all who ask in faith.

I thank Thee, O Christ, that what vain man would make hard and difficult, Thou makest simple and easy.

I WANT no interceding priest Between my Christ and me;

I want no vigil, fast, or feast, To help me on to Thee.

Thy Spirit in me with Thy word Shall give my soul to see,

The way of coming to my Lord Is one of liberty.

November 26th.

AM I resigned to God in the most trying dispensations of His providence towards me?—

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.—Job i. 21.

It is the Lord : let Him do what seemeth Him good.—1 Sam. iii. 18.

HOW ignorant we are of the future ! We rise in the morning, but know nothing of what may occur before night. We start on a journey, and know nothing of what may take place before we return. It is well, perhaps, that this is so. Anyhow, it is wise for us to be prepared for any event that may transpire, and bow in acquiescence to Him Who orders all things well.

Rabbi Meir was from home, and during his absence his two sons died. His wife laid them upon the bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies. On her husband's return she thus addressed him : " Rabbi, I would fain ask thee one question. A few days ago a person entrusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them back again ; should I give him them ? " " This is a question," said Rabbi Meir, " which you should not have thought it necessary to ask. Wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own ? " " No," she replied ; " but yet I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting you therewith." She then led him to the bedside, and took off the covering from the bodies. " Ah ! my sons, the light of mine eyes ; I was your father, but you were my teachers." The mother too wept bitterly. At length she said, " Rabbi, we must not be reluctant to restore that which was entrusted to our keeping. See, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away ; and blessed be the name of the Lord." " Blessed be the name of the Lord," echoed Rabbi Meir ; " and blessed be His name for Thy sake too ! "

The above is a noble instance of resignation. If, however, I desire to see one still nobler, I will contemplate the One in the garden of Gethsemane. In the presence of Him, sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, wrestling with powers that would keep Him from the Cross, and in His bloody sweat bowing to the Divine will—I would learn how to resign myself to God.

Eternal Father, if in my daily life I obey Thy word, it will be an excellent training for submission to Thy will in sorrow, suffering and death.

SUBMISSIVE to Thy just decree,
We all shall soon from earth remove ;
But when Thou sendest, Lord, for me,
O let the messenger be love !

November 27th.

I*F I am one of God's children, what more do I need to complete my happiness?—*

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.—Ps. xvi. 5.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light.—Ep. i. 12.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.—Jas. i. 5.

If a fish has the ocean to swim in, what more can it want? If a bird has the air to fly in, will it desire the limitations of a cage? If a man is heir to a kingdom, will he wish that he was heir only to a cottage? If one walk in cloudless sunshine, can he have brighter light to make his day?

So if I am a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus, is there a higher relationship for me to enjoy? If I have power to "prevail with God," and to "tread upon all the power of the enemy," is there any greater power for me to desire? If I am "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," can I look down upon temporal blessings in earthly places, to covet them? If I have a good title to "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," why should I trouble about an inheritance which is uncertain and transient? If I have the Trinity, angels and all good people as my associates in life, can I improve upon them by choosing the company of the world? If I have resources of pleasure, which are pure, serene, elevating, boundless, why should I leave these to go to broken cisterns which can hold no water?

While to the natural man, religion is as a wilderness, wherein are famine, drought, "fiery serpents and scorpions," enemies and conflicts; it is to me and to all believers in Jesus, "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of oil olive and honey;" a land whose "sun shall no more go down; neither shall the moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." I cannot desire a better. There is no better if I desire one. Bless the Lord, O my soul, Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies!

O Lord, I thank Thee, for my present inheritance of grace, and my promised inheritance of glory in the future.

THE Lord alone my Portion is, and mine Inheritance;

And Thou art He that guards my lot from every evil chance,
The fields wherein my lot is cast in loveliness excel,
And in her pleasant heritage my soul delights to dwell.

DO I feel encouraged to fidelity and perseverance in a holy life, as I meditate upon my future home?—

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. ii. 10.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.—Rev. ii. 17.

I THINK of heaven, my future home, as a state and a place, in which there will be total exemption from all the things which now contribute to my unrest and dissatisfaction; and a perfection of all things which now contribute to my happiness and holiness. Hence, "all former things," as they exist in this life, "shall be done away": the evil absolutely; the good, by development into consummation. That is, as the darkness of night will vanish, so will dawn of morning, in the everlasting noon of light; as the snows and frosts of winter will end, so will the spring-tide merge into a perpetual summer of brightness, calmness, fruitfulness, and joy.

Hence, again, not only will there be no sin, but holiness will be absolute, without temptation to sin. Not only no poverty, but an abundance of riches. Not only no wars, bickerings, strifes, calumnies, animosities and jealousies, but the fulness of love, unity, peace and concord. Not only the absence of tears, afflictions, separations, and death, but the presence of life eternal, buoyant with health, joy, and inviolable union. Not only the cessation of hunger and thirst, but a never-failing banquet of delights and pleasures enjoyed at the King's table and in His abiding presence of manifested glory in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only a rest once a week, but a Sabbath of unceasing duration, in which all activities will be blessed repose.

This heaven, the half of which cannot be told, this side of it, is for every one that will live for it on earth. There will be as much room for the last one that enters as there was for the first.

This heaven, by God's grace, I will aim at. It were a little thing to live a life in a desert three-score years and ten, or to die a hundred martyr-deaths, to gain it at last. But it is not of merit. It is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Jesus calls me to it: "Whosoever will let him come."

ONWARD I go, for still I hear them singing,
'Come, weary soul! for Jesus bids me come,'
And, through the dark its echoes sweetly ringing,
The music of the Gospel leads me home,
Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
Singing to welcome a pilgrim of the night.

November 29th.

AM I sufficiently aware of the danger of my soul-life in religion to decline and death?—

My soul cleaveth unto the dust : quicken Thou me according to Thy word.—Ps. cxix. 25.

My soul melteth for heaviness : strengthen Thou me according to Thy word.—Ps. cxix. 28.

This is my comfort in my affliction : for Thy word hath quickened me.—Ps. cxix. 50.

LIFE in everything natural has a tendency in itself to languish and expire, to say nothing of outside forces which sometimes contribute to this. It is only by periodical, and in some instances, constant supplies of adapted influences, that it will continue its allotted time in existence.

There are many causes at work to damage my spiritual life, as there are to affect other kinds of life! Therefore I have need always to take every care that my soul-life is well-guarded against them. This life is not self-supporting any more than it is self-originated. Its tendency, if left alone, is like fire, to go out, like beauty, to fade, like fragrance, to expend itself. Whether sickly or healthy it is all the same. In the one case, it may the more quickly expire; in the other, its continuance might be prolonged. I have need, therefore, ever and anon, to be renewing my strength with the provisions of grace, as the fireman again and again supplies the fire with fuel to keep up the force which draws the train. I must awaken my energies when they flag, as a man who is responsible for accomplishing a certain work before he retires at night. I must stir up the gift of God that is in me. I must rest in the Lord, and delight myself in Him. I must walk in the Light. I must be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord. In a word, I must use the means which God has given me, to keep the life of my soul in health and strength, as I use the means to keep my body healthy and vigorous.

The Psalmist in the 119th Psalm prays eight or nine times that the Lord would "quicken" him. He says, "my soul cleaveth unto the dust : my soul fainteth for heaviness;" such was his consciousness of the deadness to which the life of his soul was exposed. So will I pray daily unto God. He sees me languish when perhaps I am not aware of it. My prayer shall be :—"QUICKEN THOU ME, O LORD, ACCORDING TO THY WORD."

I COULD not do without Thee, I cannot stand alone,
I have no strength or goodness, No wisdom of my own ;
But Thou, beloved Saviour, Art all in all to me !
And perfect strength in weakness, Is theirs who lean on Thee.

November 30th.

HOWEVER innocent the world's pleasures may seem, and its pursuits praiseworthy, are they not likely to deceive me, unless I am on my guard?—

I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil — John xvii. 15.

Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.— Gal. i. 4.

The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.—James iv. 4.

I HAVE observed a servant following his master with a stranger accompanying him; but when the master parted from the stranger, I noticed that the servant did not follow the stranger but his master.

Thus must I do. If the world in anything does keep company with my Lord by His permission, I must follow Him all the same, not in any way, however, recognizing the world as my master; and when He and the world part, I must not follow the world but my Lord.

I have read an account of a farmer who lived on the sea-side near Plymouth. He saw the success of many of his neighbours in going to sea and doing business in foreign lands. He was tempted to embark on the same enterprise. He sold his farming stock, and bought a ship, and sailed to Spain, and obtained a freight of figs. On his return a storm arose; and to lighten his vessel to save him from shipwreck, he threw his figs overboard, saying as he did so, "Oh, there goes my oxen, my sheep, and all I have in the world." He reaches home, and is ridiculed by his neighbours for his folly. However, some take pity on him, and help him back to farming. One day he was ploughing near the sea, and observing how smooth and beautiful it looked, he said, "How is it you look so smooth now? You long for more figs, do you? Your fair looks shall never deceive me again, I warrant you. Drive on, boy!"

Thus the world is very deceiving. It tempts us with its smiles and flatteries to embark on its pursuits of gain and pleasure; and then swallows up all our good things, and leaves us poor indeed before God. I will not *trust* it. I will follow my Lord, who takes from me nothing but sin, and gives me grace and glory.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou art my Master, not this deceitful world. Whither Thou goest I will go.

WEALTH, honour, pleasure, and what else
This short-enduring world can give,
Tempt as ye will, my soul repels,
To Christ alone resolved to live.

"Give Me Thy Heart."

I N the dark church she knelt alone,
Her tears were falling fast ;
"Help, Lord," she cried, "the shades of death
Upon my soul are cast !
Have I not shunned the path of sin,
And chosen the better part ?"—
What voice came through the sacred air ?—
"My child, give Me thy heart !"

"Have I not laid before Thy shrine
My wealth, O Lord !" she cried ;
"Have I kept ought of gems or gold,
To minister to pride ?
Have I not bade youth's joys retire
And vain delights depart ?"—
But sad and tender was the voice—
"My child, give Me thy heart !"

"Have I not, Lord, gone day by day
Where Thy poor children dwell ;
And carried help, and gold, and food ?
O Lord, *Thou* knowest it well !
From many a house, from many a soul,
My hand bids care depart."—
More sad, more tender, was the voice,—
"My child, give Me thy heart !"

"Have I not worn my strength away,
With fast and penance sore ?
Have I not watched and wept ?" she cried ;
"Did Thy dear saints do more ?
Have I not gained Thy grace, O Lord,
And won in Heaven my part ?"—
It echoed louder in her soul—
"My child, give Me thy heart !"

A. Proctor.

The Life of Christ.

Where shall we find the Lord ?
Where seek His face adored ?
Is it apart from men,
In deep sequestered den,
By Jordan's desert flood,
Or mountain solitude,
Or lonely mystic shrine,
That Heaven reveals the Life Divine ?

Where shall we trace the Lord ?
'Twas at the festal board,
Amidst the innocent mirth,
And hallowed joys of earth,
Close neighbour, side by side,
With bridegroom and with bride,
Whilst flowed the cheering wine,
That first appeared the Life Divine.

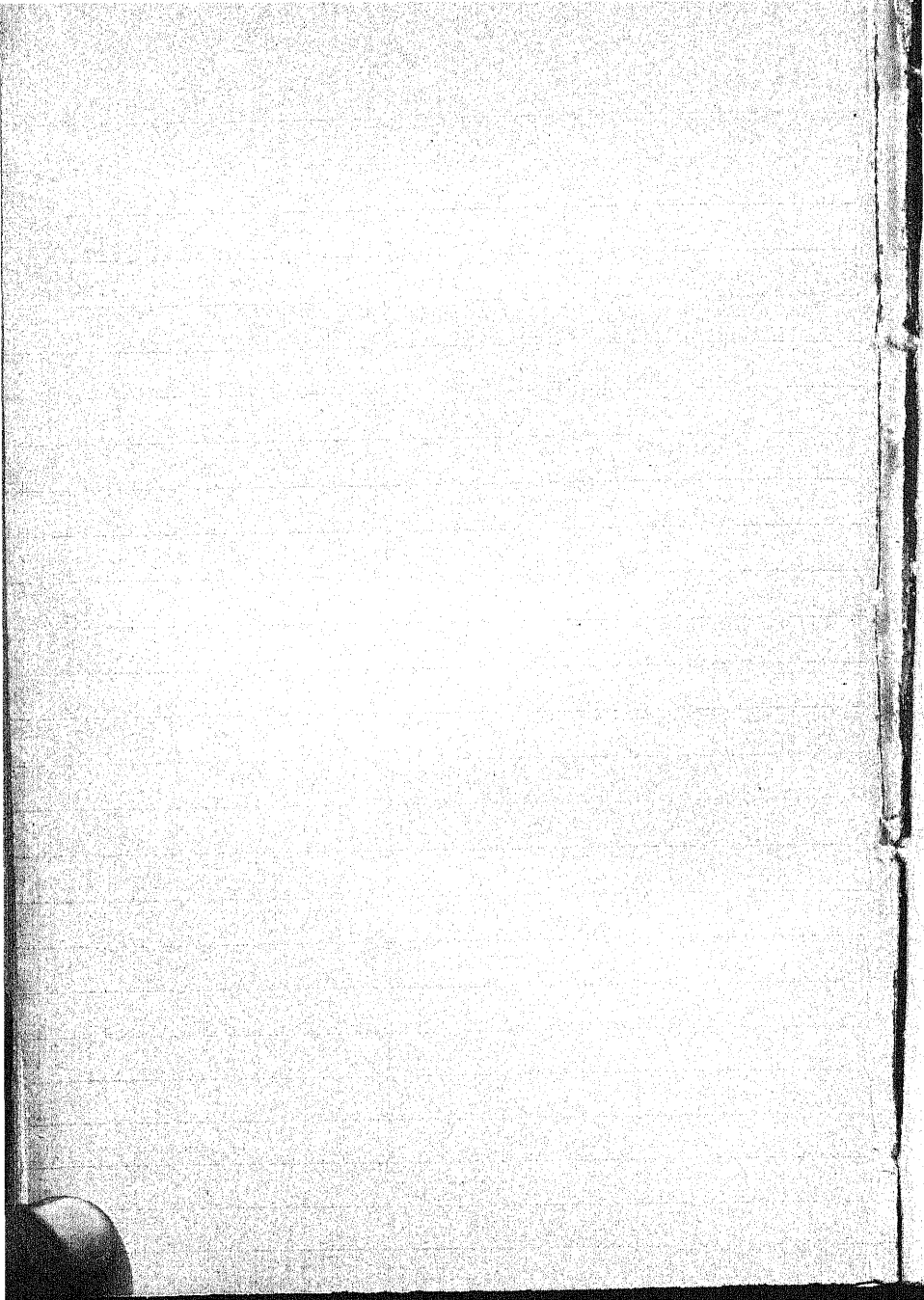
What was the blest abode,
Where dwelt the Son of God ?
Beside the busy shore,
Where thousands pressed the door,
Where town with hamlet vied,
Where eager traffic plied,
There with His calm design
Was wrought and taught the Life Divine.

What were the souls He sought ?
What moved His inmost thought ?
The friendless and the poor,
The woes none else could cure,
The grateful sinner's cry,
The heathen's Heavenward sigh—
Each in their lot and line
Drew forth the Love and Life Divine.

Where did He give, the while,
His most benignant smile ?
The little children's charms,
That nestled in His arms,
The flowers that round Him grew,
The birds that o'er Him flew,
Were nature's sacred sign
To breathe the spell of Life Divine.

Where shall the Lord repose,
When pressed by fears and foes ?
Amidst the friends He loves
In Bethany's dear groves,
Or at the parting feast
Where yearning host and guest
In converse sweet recline,
Is closed in peace the Life Divine.

Memoranda.



December 1st.

DO I believe that apart from Jesus Christ I have no Christian life, and can have none?—

This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. This is the true God, and eternal life.—1 John v. 11, 20.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.—John iii. 36.

OUR souls were born into this world in a state of *spiritual death*, without any desire for God, or feeling after Him. In their growth and development, their tendency is to go farther and farther from Him, until they become totally and for ever alienated from Him. There is nothing in themselves, or in nature, or in human institutions and laws, that can arrest this tendency, and give divine life, any more than there is to give physical life to a child born dead.

All life of the body is from God *in nature*. All life of the soul is from God *in Christ*, communicated by the Holy Spirit. When "born of the Spirit" we receive life in Christ, as when born of woman we received life in nature.

Hence, Christian life is from and in Christ. "In Him is life." "He is the Fountain of life." "In His favour is life." "He that believeth on the Son hath life." "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "If we believe not on Him we shall die in our sins." Our "life is hid with Christ in God." We are "quickened and raised into newness of life" in Christ, and made to "sit together with Him in heavenly places." We abide in Him and He in us. We walk in Him, have hope in Him, peace in Him, joy in Him. We trust in Him, conquer in Him, die in Him, and live with Him in glory everlasting. As the tendency of life in nature is towards the sun, so life in the soul follows after Him from Whom it emanates. Thus I find, that spiritual life in its origin, maintenance, continuance, and perfection, is only and entirely from and in Christ.

Though I have the most refined moralities, and practise the most religious ceremonies; though I have faith to remove mountains, zeal to be a martyr for my creed or church, knowledge all-comprehensive, if I have not life in Christ, I am still "dead in trespasses and in sins."

O Thou Spirit of Jesus, I look to Thee, and Thee alone, for Christian life and its manifestations in my soul!

CLING to the Bleeding One, cling to His side;
Cling to the Living One, in Him abide;
Cling to the Coming One, hope shall arise;
Cling to the Reigning One, joy lights thine eyes.

December 2nd.

WOULD I be satisfied with such a degree of prosperity in temporal things as would correspond with my prosperity in spiritual things?—

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.—iii. John 2.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matt. vi. 33.

THERE are few Christians that do not desire and seek after worldly prosperity. When sought in a right spirit, by right means, and for right ends, this is laudable. As to the *standard* of prosperity, that may be another matter. A literary Christian may wish prosperity after the measure of one who has attained the highest distinctions in the world of letters. A Christian tradesman or merchant, may wish prosperity like that of one who has accumulated a fortune in a few years, and is now enjoying the luxuries of affluence. A Christian statesman may wish prosperity in the measure of one that has won distinguished honours in the political world. But how few Christians in desiring worldly prosperity desire it according to the extent of their spiritual prosperity. Alas, how meagre would it be were this its gauge of measurement. How few *rich* Christians there would be in the world!

May I, "above all things," desire and seek prosperity in my soul to the utmost extent of which it is capable in the abundant blessings at my command in the kingdom of God and His righteousness. May I become rich in faith and good works; be "filled with all the fulness of God." There need be no limit to my accumulation. The resources are infinite. I need envy no rivalry or competition. I need not make haste or be anxious. I need fear no failure while I "give all diligence." I might then say to myself, "I will seek prosperity in this world in the same proportion that I prosper in my soul." In this case, I might have *two* prosperities instead of one. Anyhow, I would make sure of one, and that the most noble and satisfactory. But if worldly prosperity is my chief and first aim, I run the risk of not gaining this, and absolutely losing the other.

O God, make me wise before it is too late. Open my eyes to see the folly of running after vain shows, while I am leaving behind me the unsearchable riches of grace and glory.

I SEEK Thy kingdom first, Thy gracious joy and peace,
Thou know'st I hunger, Lord, and thirst after Thy righteousness
My chief and sole desire Thine image to regain,
And then to join the heavenly choir, and in Thy glory reign.

WHAT are my reliefs when the subject of bodily pain?—

Consider Him that endured such contradictions of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Heb. xii. 3.

These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.—Rev. vii. 14.

A CHRISTIAN, as such, is not exempt from pain. It comes to him, as to other men, in its self-asserting, arbitrary, and extortionate claims. But the Christian has within reach for his alleviation what no other can be properly said to have. He has the power of divine patience, hope, and trust, which, if it does not remove pain, marvellously subdues its murmurings, and moderates its selfishness.

Another means he has. He can meditate upon persons and subjects which, either by comparison or contrast, will help to relieve his anguish. He can, by anticipation of a coming state of existence, where there is no pain, find a palliative that will modify somewhat the miseries of his state. Then, again, he is free from the torments of a guilty conscience.

The Rev. Alfred Cookman in his last illness said to a brother minister, "If the bones of my feet were all teeth, and each one had what we call a jumping toothache, it would give you some idea of what I suffer. Yet I wish that I could tell you how precious Jesus has been to me during my sickness. I have had such views of Him as I never had before. Right in the midst of my intensest sufferings He has so manifested Himself to me that I have been lifted above them all."

The Rev. Dr. Payson was a martyr to pain in his last illness. He says, "These convulsions grow worse and worse, until every bone is almost dislocated with pain, leaving me with the certainty that I shall have it all to endure again the next night. Yet while my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly, perfectly happy and peaceful—more happy than I can possibly express to you. I lie here, and feel these convulsions extending higher and higher, without the least uneasiness; but my soul is filled with joy unspeakable. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down upon me. This is no delusion. I do not merely know that I shall enjoy happiness in heaven, *I enjoy it now.*"

O Thou Lamb of God, was ever pain like Thine? When pain shall come to me as an armed man, help me to wrestle with it in Thy patience!

PAIN, that to us mortals clings, Is but the pushing of our wings
That we have no use for yet, And the uprooting of our feet
From the soil where they are set, And the land we reckon sweet.

December 4th.

DO I attend to my own salvation as though dependent on myself, and yet as dependent upon God?—

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.—2 Peter i. 10.

The God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.—Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

THE mystery of God and man working together to bring about certain results, is obvious in almost everything. God works in man by the life He has given him, and man works with that life in his daily calling. The gardener works in the pruning of his trees, in the cultivation of his land, in the sowing of seeds: God works in giving sunshine and showers, which make the land productive of its varied fruits. The co-operation of God and man keeps the world a-going, so far as human interests are concerned.

So it is in the work of my salvation. There is my share to take in it, and there is God's. No one else can do mine, no one else can do God's. The things commanded me of God, I must do, according to my light and opportunities. But whatever I do, cannot in itself effect my salvation. Nor must I do it with that intention. The photographer may prepare his apparatus for the picture, but the sun must take it. The engine may be perfect in its make, but the steam-force must work it.

However much I may repent of sin, God must *forgive* it. It is my duty to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but *He alone* can save me. It is my privilege to pray, but it is God's prerogative to answer. If I "fight the good fight of faith," God must give the victory. If I work to do good in the world, He must make my efforts effective.

But if I cease my working, I shall lose what I have done. If God cease His, in vain I continue mine. While God works in me, I must work. He gives the will, I must use it. He gives the power, I must exercise it. He gives the life, I must improve it.

Thus it is that my salvation is of the Lord; as the light which I receive into my eyes is of the sun; as the fruits which I receive from my garden through cultivation, are of the earth.

HELP me to do Thy will with loving heart and hand,
And all Thy pleasure to fulfil, and serve at Thy command.
Whilst I my work shall do, work Thou in me, O Lord,
And I shall Thy salvation see according to Thy word.

IF I cannot do great things for my Lord, am I doing what I can?—

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.—Luke xvi. 10.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—Matt. xxv. 21.

ALAS, how common it is for Christians to do nothing for God, because they cannot do things according to their ideal, or as they see others do. This is a stratagem of Satan by which he keeps back the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Let us understand that the greatest works in nature as in the world of humanity, are accomplished by agents the smallest and least prominent. It is not the man who makes the grandest display and obtains the loudest applause, that accomplishes the most good. Quiet, silent, steady workers are the most useful.

The pastor of a village church, in speaking to a friend one day, said, "There is a man in our church, a carpenter, who does more good, I really believe, in our village than any other person who ever lived in it. He cannot speak very well in our meetings, and he doesn't often try. He is not a rich man, and never has much money to give to any object. But a new family never comes into the village that he does not find out. He calls on them, gives them a hearty welcome, and kindly offers to do for them anything in his power. He is always on the look-out to give strangers a seat in his pew at church. If any one is sick in the neighbourhood, he calls at the house, and offers to sit up at nights, and to attend to any business for him; and I've sometimes thought that he and his wife keep house-plants through the winter, just on purpose to have bouquets of flowers to send to sick people. He finds time to speak a pleasant word to every child he meets in the street. All the children of the village know him, and love him. And when he is driving his one-horse waggon with no other load, you will often see the children climb up into it till it is full. He has brought more scholars into our Sabbath-school than any other half-dozen people in the village. He really seems to take delight in helping people in all sorts of ways. And I never meet him in the street but it does me good to look at him."

Blessed Master, help me to do what *I can* for Thee, and not *aim* at doing what others do, and *do* nothing.

MAY I my gracious Master serve,
As best I can with lowly fear;
To please Him and to do His will
May I fill up my earthly sphere.

December 6th.

AS I think of what I was in my unconverted state, do I praise the Lord for the change which His grace has wrought in me?—

Dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved).—Eph. ii. 1-5.

Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.—Isa. li. 1.

A MAN on the edge of a precipice, *at night*, cannot clearly see the danger to which he is exposed, but when the morning light shines he will see it to his horror, and feel a sense of gratitude at his merciful escape.

So the believer, in the darkness of his spiritual night—blinded by the “god of this world”—did not see the fearful danger to which he was exposed. He thought all was well, and no evil could befall him. But in the light of the glorious Gospel which now shines upon him, he sees “the horrible pit and miry clay” from which he has been rescued. As he contemplates the great salvation which the Lord has wrought out for him, he joins all his powers in singing the “new song of praise” which He has “put in his mouth.” Once dead in trespasses and sins, he is now alive in God. Once a child of wrath, he is now an heir of heaven; and all of sovereign grace!

Libussa, princess of Bohemia, first ennobled, and then married, Primaslaus, who before was a plain husbandman. In remembrance of his former condition, he preserved a pair of wooden shoes. Being asked the cause of his doing so he made the following answer: “I have brought these shoes with me for the purpose of setting them up as a monument in the castle of Visegrade, and of exhibiting them to my successors, that all may know that the first prince of Bohemia was called to his high dignity from the cart and the plough; and that I myself, who am elevated to a crown, may bear constantly in mind that I have nothing whereof to be proud.”

Most gracious Father, I bless Thee for Thy distinguishing mercy. May my love of Thee increase more and more, as I think of the marvellous change Thou hast wrought in me!

MY soul, through my Redeemer's care, saved from the second death I feel; My eyes from tears of dark despair, my feet from falling into hell: Wherefore, to Him my feet shall run, my eyes on His perfect gaze, My soul shall live for God alone, and all within me shout His praise.

IS my religion anything better than the religion of the world?—

Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this . . . TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD.—James i. 27.

The friendship of this world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.—James iv. 4.

THE tendency of the age is to be satisfied with a religion in harmony with the spirit of the times. That is, a religion of ease, of self-indulgence, of conformity to the customs, fashions, pleasures, and amusements of the world, which admits of no difference between morality and Christianity; a religion without the cross, faith, repentance, self-denial, conflicts with the flesh, without a devil, hell, judgment, but all heaven. "Be not conformed to this world" is the injunction of the old religion, "come out from among them and be ye separate." "Nay, nay," says the religion of the age "that is antiquated and puritanical. Are we not all brethren? Have we not all one Father? Let us all eat and drink together, and have all things in common."

Certain philosophers, it is said, once waited on Talleyrand, a French statesman, and told him that they purposed founding a new religion. "Very well, gentlemen," he replied; "when Jesus Christ founded a religion, it was necessary for Him to be crucified, dead, and buried, and to rise from the dead the third day. When you have done as much for your religion, it will be worth discussing."

The new religion of the age does away not only with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, but with the crucifixion of self, the death of sin, the resurrection to newness of life; and therefore, there is nothing in it worth attention. It is only a religion of self-gratification, and not a whit better than human nature. It is as old as Cain the murderer, nay, it is as old as Satan himself,—its father!

A religion that can make me no better than I was before I had it, is of no use to me. It is not worth my thought. It is a mockery and delusion. I need a religion that will draw me out of and above my old self of sin, sordidness and corruption; like the sun attracting the earth round itself, and giving life, beauty, growth, strength, and fruitfulness, where before were sterility, darkness, coldness, and death.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, *this* will I seek after.

FOR who by faith your Lord receive,
Ye nothing seek or want beside;
Dead to the world and sin ye live,
Your creature-love is crucified.

December 8th.

AM I prepared for heaven should I be called away any moment from this life?—

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Heb. xii. 14.

There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.—Rev. xxi. 27.

We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.—1 Jno. iii. 2, 3.

IT is vain for one to think of being *perfectly happy* in heaven unless he first acquire a *meetness* for it. Heaven is a place of holiness. All its inhabitants are “without fault before the throne of God.” Freedom from impurity through the “blood of the Lamb” is the only preparation for heaven.

There are certain conditions of the body which influence the taste so that the sweetest flavours become ungrateful to the palate. There are indispositions that impair the sight, giving to objects of beauty some sickly hue. So the malady of sin affects the spiritual sight and taste, that they could not enjoy the fulness of joy in God’s presence, and pleasures at His right hand for evermore.

Could a greater punishment be inflicted upon an unholy soul than to allow it to enter heaven as one of its inhabitants? It would be worse than hell itself to him. Even on earth he is far happier among his own kind than with the people of God. The service of God is weariness to him as a spectator, and he is only too pleased to turn his back on it to join in the festivities and frivolities of his associates. How then could he be happy and at home in heaven? How forlornly would he wander through its courts, and how strange he would feel in the company of saints and angels! He would find no one like himself. He would see, wherever he looked, the outbeamings of Divine excellence, which would be appalling to him. He would hear sounds that would be grating on his ears; and as now he eschews the society of the good and pure, he would seek a hasty escape from this gloriously holy place, and go to his “own place,” where evil with evil join in their own indigenous elements.

As I think of this, my soul trembles lest such may be its doom! But why should it? With the hope of heaven, given me by God in Jesus, if I purify myself as He is pure where He is I shall be also, and that will be my heaven.

HEAVEN is a place of rest from sin; But all who hope to enter there, Must here that holy course begin, Which will there souls for rest prepare.

A life in heaven! O what is this? The sum of all that faith believed:
Fulness of joy and depth of bliss, Unseen, unfathomed, unconceived.

SHALL I ever attain a perfection in Christ beyond which I cannot go?—

Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.—Rom. viii. 29.

Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.—2 Cor. iii. 18.

We shall be like Him.—1 John iii. 2.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.—Phil. iii. 21.

A FRIEND of Thorwaldsen called one day to see him, when he found him in low spirits. He asked him whether anything had occurred to depress him. He replied, "My genius is decaying." "What do you mean?" inquired his friend. "Why, here is my statue of *Christ*: it is the first of my works that I have ever felt satisfied with. Till now my idea has always been far beyond what I could execute. But it is so no longer. I shall never have a great idea again."

In all things Christ has the pre-eminence. He, therefore, who has a correct idea of Him, has reached the perfection of ideas, beyond which there is none greater. He who retains this has always the greatest idea. But may not this idea grow and develop beyond limitation as the Subject is infinite?

But I would not be satisfied with working a perfect idea of the Christ in marble, or in colours, or in imagination. I would realize myself perfect in Him and Him perfect in me. Then, when this is realized, I would not be satisfied, only so far as I am perfect. I would develop in this perfection, even as a perfect babe into a perfect man. Though God may say of the ocean, Hitherto thou shalt come, and no farther, He does not say that to me, as I am perfect in Christ. There is no boundary line beyond which I may not go. I have the whole Christ to live, move, and have my being of perfection in. Eternity will not be too long to grow in the infinity of my Saviour's perfection.

A greater *idea* than an infinite perfect Christ, I cannot have; but if I have Christ Himself, I have more than the idea. In Him I may go on from perfection to perfection through endless ages, and not go beyond the ideal which I have in Him.

GIVE me the enlarged desire, and open, Lord, my soul,
Thy own fulness to require and comprehend the whole;
Stretch my faith's capacity wider, and yet wider still:
Then with all that is in Thee my soul for ever fill.

December 10th.

HAVE I fellowship with Christ and with all His people united to Him, whoever they are and wherever they live?—

We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another.—Rom. xii. 5.

God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.—1 Cor. i. 9.

That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.—Eph. iii. 6.

THE New Testament recognises no universal church but that of the Lord Jesus, “which is His body.” All believers in Him are members of that church, in which all distinctions of names, classes, sex, nationalities, ages, and circumstances, are done away. “Where there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Sythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

All that are in Him are members one of another, and derive one common life from Him, as all the branches of a tree are partakers of the same sap as the tree. As God hath made of “one blood all the nations of men,” so Christ of His Spirit has made of one life all who love and obey Him. In this one life they have fellowship, and also in every other element of their being in Him. Extraneous things cannot affect this fellowship. They have the same joy, the same peace, the same hope, the same faith, the same Spirit, the same baptism, the same God and Father, the same temptations, the same “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” Differences in creeds, rituals, catechisms, church governments, and such-like, do not interfere with their fellowship of life in Christ, as differences in national or social customs do not with their fellowship in the life of nature.

How blessedly and gloriously this truth lifts me above all the narrow jealousies of sects and parties. Into what a spacious heaven of light and liberty it introduces me! I have fellowship in Christ with all who believe in Him and love Him, whether they are near or afar off; whether they are rich or poor; whether they own me or disown me; whether they have my creed, or are in my church, or use my ceremonies, or wear my badge, or utter my Shibboleth; or whether in these things they are utterly different. These have no effect upon my union with Christ, and my fellowship with all who are in union with Him.

Divine Head of the Living Church, I bless Thee for Thy loving recognition of all who believe in Thee. I thank Thee for the one life which flows from Thee into every member.

CHRIST'S faith makes but one Body of all souls,

And Love's that Body's soul:

What soul see'er in any language can

Speak Heaven like her's is my soul's countryman.

IS it my prayer every morning that I may live that day so as to give out a clear light for Christ?—

And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.—Exod. xxvii. 20.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.—Matt. v. 16.

TO begin the day with God in prayer and meditation, is the best preparation for a good day in everything.

It is related in the biography of one who lived to become a devoted Christian, that while he was yet a little boy, the passage read from the Bible in the family on a certain occasion was Exodus xxvii. 20, describing the oil used in the vessels of the tabernacle. The meaning and application of the verse was explained by other passages from the New Testament. This boy was then but five years old, and it was not supposed that he could understand or feel the slightest interest in a subject considered far beyond his age. The older children left the room after family worship, but the little boy was detained, as usual, to be taught some simple verses of the Bible by his mother, and to pray with her. He kneeled down at length to pray, and in the midst of his prayer, he paused, and exclaimed earnestly, "O my God, make *me* to burn this day with *pure oil*!"

The morning lesson had not been lost upon him; he had understood its import. "Most evidently," says his biographer, "was this prayer heard and answered throughout the day of his life."

May it be my petition every morning, "Make me to burn this day with pure oil!" If God vouchsafe to me a daily answer, my life will be one that will honour Jesus. Others will see my good works, and glorify their Father Who is in heaven. The pure oil, which is the Holy Ghost, can alone make me to shine as a Christian ought. With His "unction" upon me I shall shine as a light in the darkness of the world, holding forth the word of life. Phil. ii. 15, 16.

O blessed and eternal Spirit, do Thou dwell and live in me, and through me shine in the beauty of Thy grace and Holiness to the praise and glory of God!

RISING to sing my Saviour's praise,
Thee may I publish all day long,
And let Thy precious word of grace
Flow my heart and fill my tongue;
Fill all my life with purest love,
And join me to the church above.

WHILST *I have pleasure in the public services of the sanctuary and in taking part in religious revivals, am I diligent in doing the will of God in all things?—*

Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire . . . I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is written in my heart.—Ps. xl. 6, 8.

Blessed is the man . . . that delighteth greatly in His commandments.
—Ps. cxli. 1.

My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.—Jno. iv. 34.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man.—Rom. vii. 22.

THE religious times in which we live, are times of great enterprise, competition, excitement, socialistic movements, and new schemes for doing good. Great demands are made upon our money, our co-operation, our activities. Ever and anon, something novel is being introduced to create attention, and to break what is thought to be the monotony of the old order.

Hence, in the midst of this state of things the danger is lest Christians make their religion to consist in public means, in kind actions, in philanthropic schemes, in being useful to others, whether below or around them. One has not a word to say against anything that will contribute to the relief of the poor, to the elevation of the masses, to the ingathering of the multitudes to the fold of the Good Shepherd. But while all these things are being attended to, we must not forget that it is only *external* work, drawing upon the flame of life within. It is all an out-giving of oil; and if there be no incomings the flame will not burn long. If there is little or no closet devotion, no devout meditation, no searching the Scriptures, no self-examination, no family religion, no communication of life and power from the Holy Spirit, all these outward manifestations will be too hollow to last. *They* make not religion in its inner, enduring reality. God does not require us to neglect our own vineyard to attend to others; nor is there any need to do so.

I will, first of all, see to it that my soul is right with God, and study to keep it right; then shall I be better equipped to go forth and labour for the good of others.

O God, help me in this my resolve. Give me Thy Holy Spirit to keep the sacred flame of Thy love aglow within me.

NOT only for some task sublime, Thy blessing I implore;
Not only on some solemn time Thy Holy Spirit pour!
O ne'er can I my Helper spare; I want Thee all the way;
I want my Saviour everywhere; I want Thee every day.
Lord! for each daily task of mine I want Thy quickening power;
I want Thy smile away to shine the trouble of each hour.

December 13th.

5

AM I conqueror of the world?—

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.—1 John v. 4, 5.

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. xv. 57.

THE greatest danger of Christians is from the world, the influence of the visible course of things around them. To this danger, John, in his general Epistle, seems to call special attention. "Viewing it," says one, "as resisting Christianity," he calls it the 'Spirit of Antichrist,' the parent of a numerous progeny of evil, false spirits like itself, the teachers of all lying doctrines, by which the multitude of men are led captive. The antagonist of this great tempter is the Spirit of Truth, which is 'greater than he that is in the world'; its victorious antagonist, because gifted with those piercing eyes of Faith which are able to scan the world's shallowness, and to see through the mists of error into the glorious kingdom of God beyond them. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' The true conqueror of the world is he who can say with Paul, 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,' and, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?' etc. 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.' Such an one has recourse by faith to an infallible standard—the Word of God: indeed, there is no other. He detects the world, and will not be imposed upon by it. When he is tempted to take the world's good things as his portion, he rejects them, because he has something better in hand. Thus, faith in Christ overcometh the corrupt influence, the inordinate love, the slavish fear, the idolatry, the friendship, the false wisdom, and the maxims of the world: it overcometh not only the folly, but the very religion of the world, as far as it is a false religion. The Christian has hold of a superior influence, and engages a superior strength. 'Doubtless,' says he, 'I have great enemies to attack, but greater is He that is with me than he that is in the world.'"

O Thou Divine Lord, come Thou and take possession of me, then shall I, in Thy strength, bring the world under my feet, and march over it in victory to heaven.

LOVE not the world!

However fair it seem;

Who loveth this fond world? The love of God

Abideth not in him.

DO I sufficiently appreciate the privileges and blessings which I enjoy in Jesus Christ?—

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.—Eph. i. 3.

Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—1 Cor. i. 30.

And of His fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.—John i. 16.

And ye are complete in Him.—Col. ii. 9.

AS God has deposited in nature all things that man needs for the supply of his physical necessities, so has He deposited in Christ all the blessings man needs to supply his spiritual necessities.

Am I in darkness? He is the Sun of Righteousness to give me light. Do I hunger? He is that Bread which cometh down from heaven, of which, if I eat I shall never die. Do I thirst? He is the water of life, of which, if I drink, I shall thirst no more. Am I poor? In Him are riches unsearchable, of which, if I partake, I am poor no longer. Am I weak? I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me. Am I impure? His blood cleanseth me. Am I at enmity with God? He is my peace with God. Am I a prodigal from my Father? He is my way of return. Do I want access to God in prayer? I have it in Him. My hope of heaven is in Him. My victory over the world is through Him. God loves me in Him; forgives all my sins for His name's sake; redeems me from all iniquity by His blood; sanctifies me through His truth; roots, grounds, and establishes me in Him; perfects me in Him; gives me power over sin, death and hell in Him; gives me a part in the first resurrection in Him, and glorifies me for ever in Him.

What should I have, or be, without Christ? As much a nonentity in spiritual things as I should be in temporal things without the earth. They who ask me to give up Jesus, may as well ask me to give up nature. They know not what they ask. Give up my All in All and take to cold morality, dry philosophy, vain self-righteousness! That would indeed be a foolish exchange!

No, blessed Jesus, I will cling to Thee as my All Sufficiency; as my Everlasting Sufficiency in grace and glory, both on earth and in heaven!

JESU, Thy Name salvation is,
And keeps my happy soul above;
Comfort it brings, and power, and peace,
And joy, and everlasting love;
To me, with Thy dear Name is given
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

December 15th.

IN my methods of doing good to others or seeking it for myself, do I follow the Lord Jesus as my Example?—

Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.—Matt. i. 21.

CHRIST came into our world to save His people from their sins; to seek and save them that were lost; to call sinners to repentance; to destroy the works of the devil; to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to give liberty to the captive, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; to be a Light to the Gentiles, and the Glory of His people Israel.

While in the world, Jesus always made His corporal acts of goodness, subordinate to His spiritual. When He was asked to heal the man sick of the palsy, He began by telling him that his sins were forgiven. The principle involved in this one act applies to all His works.

His teachings agree with His doings. "Seek **FIRST** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food, raiment, etc.) shall be added unto you." When some of the Jews followed Him for the loaves and fishes, He said unto them, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth (that is, not primarily or only), but for that which endureth unto everlasting life."

Nor was Jesus indifferent to the social well-being of individuals. According to His Divine wisdom and beneficence, He reached the less by means of the greater. He knew how man through his sin had perverted things by placing earth above and heaven below—trampling on heaven and aspiring after earth. His aim was first to destroy the cause of this perversion in man, and raise him into heavenly places, and then, like Himself, make temporal things secondary in his pursuit.

The Apostles proceeded on the same lines as their Lord. To serve the imperishable interests of souls was to them before "serving tables."

The jewel is more precious than the casket. If I have God, I have all things. He gives "grace and glory, and withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly." Godliness is profitable unto **ALL** things. What human secularism can exceed this?

Gracious God, I take Thee as my Father. I will trust Thee for all things. As Thy child I shall want for nothing.

WOULDST Thou the body's health restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul?
The sin-sick soul Thou lov'st much more,
And surely Thou wilt make it whole.

December 16th.

THOUGH in a sense it is true, "*No man liveth to himself,*" yet is it not true that *I have an individuality which is peculiarly and especially my own, and for which I am responsible to God?*—

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—Rom. xiv. 10, 12.

Every man shall bear his own burden.—Gal. vi. 5.

I AM conscious of my identity with the human race, my connection with others in the family to which I belong and in society in which I move. I am conscious of influence which I exert upon others, though I may not see it or think much about it. I cannot live without doing good or evil, which has its effects upon others. It may be silent; it may be small; but there it is as an inevitable fact.

At the same time I have an individuality which exists in a world of its own. I was born alone; I must die alone. I am not another though I live, eat, drink, and work with others. I think, speak, and act by myself. My conscience, my motives, my thoughts, my purposes are my own. My inner self is alone. I have my own peculiar tempers, passions, appetites, habits, prejudices, idiosyncracies. My life plan is my own, with which no one has a right to inter-meddle. My temptations, internal and external, are composed of elements which no other person can measure. I am tried alone, alone I wander in the wilderness and bear its privations, assaults, darkness, and fail or conquer. Alone I agonize with my sins, and struggle with my griefs. Alone I am searched and sifted, and tested both by God and Satan. Alone I appear before God in my sins, failings, unbelief; or in my faith, hope, prayers, aspirations, and joys. For myself and not for another must I appear naked and open before Him with Whom I have to do.

O Thou Great God, Who art Thyself alone in Thy existence, ways, and works, give me in my loneliness to feel that though I am not Thee, yet Thou art so near me that in Thee my aloneness is filled with ineffable bliss.

WHY should I faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone,—so Heaven has willed—I die?
Not e'en the tenderest heart, and next my own,
Knows half the reasons why I smile or sigh!
Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart,—
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow
Hues of their own, fresh borrow'd from the heart.

December 17th.

5

DO I preach over again the word of the Lord, which I hear from my minister?—

I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.—Ps. cxix. 46.

Christ Jesus . . . before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.—1 Tim. vi. 13.

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.—Acts viii. 4.

IF every Christian who hears the Gospel preached, would re-preach it to those that hear it not, how much more good would be accomplished by it. This would be much better than finding fault with the sermon or forgetting it. But ministers must take heed that they preach such Gospel as is worth re-preaching, and preach it in such wise as their hearers *can* take it away with them, to preach again.

The Rev. Lyman Beecher used to say that the reason why his ministry was so blessed to the salvation of men, was that he had so many pulpit reflectors in the Christians who lived out and diffused in every practical way the gospel which he proclaimed. A light placed alone scatters its beams on every hand, but a number of well-placed reflectors can concentrate and reflect its rays, and cause them to reach places where the direct rays of light would never go; so these pulpit reflectors, these Christians who take the gospel up in their lives, and who talk it, and act it, and live it from day to day, multiply the preacher's usefulness a hundredfold, and carry down into the deep and hidden corners, where sin and darkness lurk, those beams of light which without their aid would never reach the souls that sit in the shadow of death.

May I be such a pulpit reflector in my family, in my shop, among my associates, among my neighbours. May I be a "burning and a shining light." May others so see my light as to feel its influence and be drawn by it into the way of seeking after God if haply they may find Him. So may I preach the gospel, though I never enter a pulpit or take a text.

O God, forbid that I should be always receiving light, and reflecting none; always hearing the truth, and hiding it in my own mind; always receiving good, and doing none. Let such selfishness be far from me!

MAY all Thy ministers be blest
To preach Thy word with living power;
May all who hear Thy word find rest
And live that word in every hour,
Re-preach it to the sons of men
Who live in darkness and in sin.

December 18th.

UNDER special and peculiar trials, what is my faith in God?—

And Job said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not neither charged God foolishly.—Job. i. 21, 22.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.—Job. xiii. 15.

Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.—2 Kings xx. 19.

HAVE faith in God," said Jesus to His disciples. "Only believe," He said at another time. How much we lose by doubting Him, or being indifferent. The eleventh of Hebrews shows the wonders that faith in God has accomplished. Nor does that chapter end the record of the mighty works that faith has wrought. The experiences and biographies of God's saints in all ages are illuminated with instances of the triumphs of faith, not only on the high places of Zion by its prophets, but in the lowly spheres by the humble and little known.

Some years ago, Major M., a distinguished officer in the American army, and a man very much esteemed by all who knew him, had a long and severe attack of sickness. He got so low at last that his physician gave him up. All his friends expected him to die, and were greatly distressed at the thought of losing him. But while others were mourning over his expected death, his wife remained calm and even cheerful. A particular friend was astonished at her calmness and said to her: "Mrs. M., how is it that you can be so composed when your husband is so near the end of his life?" "My husband will not die now," was her quiet answer. "But everybody thinks he will, and the doctor has given him up. Why do you think he is not going to die?" "*My faith in God makes me think so.* God has said, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' Now I have asked God that He will not take my husband away till he becomes a Christian, and gives evidence that he is ready to die. He has not yet given that evidence. And so I do not think he is going to die now." And it turned out just as she said. A change came over her husband's symptoms. He began to get better. He was restored to good health. He became an earnest Christian, and lived for years a useful, happy life.

Lord, increase my faith at all times, especially in the darkest and most trying seasons of life.

NEVER may my faith give way
In the darkest hour of life,
But on Thee in calmness stay
Till shall end the mortal strife.

December 19th.

5

WHAT is my conduct towards the weak-kneed and feeble-minded of God's children?—

Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.—Isa. xxxv. 5.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.—Heb. xii. 12, 13.

BUNYAN has beautifully described my relation and my duty to those of my brethren who are called "feeble-minded." I am not to slight them; nor am I to discourage them, but help them all I can with my prayers and counsel. The way in which they are going to Mount Zion is the King's highway, as much for them as for me, and the wayfaring man, though a fool shall not err therein:—

"Now Mr. Feeble-mind, when they were going out at the door, made as if he intended to linger; the which, when Mr. Great-heart espied, he said, 'Come, Mr. Feeble-mind, pray do you go along with us; I will be your conductor, and you shall fare as the rest.'

"Feeble-mind: 'Alas! I want a suitable companion: you are all lusty and strong; but I, as you see, am weak: I choose, therefore, rather to come behind, lest, by reason of my many infirmities, I should be both a burden to myself and to you. I am, as I said, a man of weak and feeble mind, and shall be offended and made weak at that which others can bear. I shall like no laughing: I shall like no gay attire: I shall like no unprofitable questions. Nay, I am so weak a man as to be offended with that which others have a liberty to do. I do not know all the truth; I am a very ignorant Christian man. Sometimes, if I hear any rejoice in the Lord, it troubles me because I cannot do so too. It is with me as it is with a weak man among the strong, or as with a sick man among the healthy, or as 'a lamp despised'; so that I know not what to do. 'He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease,' Job xii. 5.'

"'But, brother,' said Mr. Great-heart, 'I have it in commission to 'comfort the feeble-minded,' and 'to support the weak.' You must needs go along with us: we will wait for you; we will lend you our help; we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionate and practical, for your sake; we will not enter into 'doubtful disputations' before you; we will be 'made all things' to you, rather than you shall be left behind.'"

THOUGH feeble-minded, Lord, with Thee close by my side,
Thou wilt to me Thy help afford, and be my loving Guide.

IS the foundation of my religious life in the grace of God in my heart? Or, do I make clean the outside of things only?—

Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.—Job xxxi. 6.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.—Ps. cxxxviii. 23, 24.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.—Ps. xxvi. 2.

TO “make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter,” is important, but to make clean the inside is still more important. A filthy cup within, however clean without, is revolting. Becoming apparel, accompanied with civility, good manners, and an amiable disposition, are welcome to one’s society and recognition; but genuine good nature, indwelling virtuous principles, a spirit of purity and love, are more acceptable. Who is more repulsive than a gentleman in appearance, and a voluptuary in reality?

These thoughts will apply to the Christian. A clean hand is good; a clean heart is better. Religion resting on the Scripture, or on a Scriptural creed, in association with a church, is to be commended; but religion built upon and sustained by the reigning grace and Spirit of Christ in the soul far exceeds it, as life in a poor man is better than death arrayed in royal apparel. The amenities of religion in external observances—religious etiquette—so to speak, may not be objectionable, but the honest hand, the true heart, the full assurance of faith, the fervent love, the unswerving fidelity, are preferable beauties and more excellent charms in the character of a Christian.

A certain ambassador once presented himself among the Roman senators with his hoary hair and pale cheeks coloured with vermilion. A discerning senator stood up and said, “What sincerity are we to expect at this man’s hands, whose locks and looks and lips do lie?” Thus the Lord asks, Who sees through all our deceptive appearances in religion.

O God, look through me with Thine eyes of flaming love. What Thou seest in me out of harmony with my profession, put right. Make me all of a piece; so that I shall be within as without; true and righteous *altogether*.

IF I have only known Thy fear,
And followed with a heart sincere
Thy drawings from above,
Now, now the further grace bestow,
And let my sprinkled conscience know
Thy sweet forgiving love.

December 21st.

AM I conscious of being always in the way of duty?—

Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.—Eecl. xii. 13.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.—Luke xvii. 10.

FIRST let us have the conviction that we are in the place or way of duty, then let us stand to it in the name of God, to whom we are responsible. We may then fear no consequences, for whatever they may be, they will not affect our destiny. Our duty will decide that. On the other hand, if we are found wandering from duty and trespassing on forbidden ground, consequences may be disastrous to us. Bunyan's pilgrims strayed into By-path meadow, and were seized and thrust into Doubting castle.

Whilst King William, at a battle in Flanders, was giving orders in the thickest of the fight, he saw, to his surprise, among his staff one Michael Godfrey, a merchant of London and deputy-governor of the Bank of England, who had thus exposed himself in order to gratify his curiosity. The king, riding up to him, said, "Sir, you ought not to run these hazards; you are not a soldier, you can be of no use here." "Sire," answered Godfrey, "I run no more hazard than your majesty." "Not so," said William, "I am here where it is my duty to be, and I may, without presumption, commit my life to God's keeping; but you —." The sentence needed no completion, for at that very moment a cannon-ball laid Godfrey lifeless at the king's feet. He had been wise had he restricted himself to the ways of his calling and duty.

Following "that which is good," whether to practice or to experience, I am in the way of duty. In that way, no harm shall come to me. God has given His angels charge concerning me. They are my ministering spirits. I am willing to run any risks, with them and their Lord on my side.

An American Indian was once asked, "Why do you think the 'beloved ones' take care of you?" He answered, "When I was in battle, the bullets went on this side and on that side; and this man died and that man died, and I am alive! So I know the 'beloved ones' take care of me."

May I from this Indian learn how God takes care of me in duty.

ANGELS our servants are, And keep in all our ways;
And in their watchful hands they bear The sacred sons of grace:
Unto that heavenly bliss They all our steps attend;
And God Himself our Father is, And Jesus is our Friend.

December 22nd.

AM I walking in the "good old way" which God has opened before me?—

And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.—Isa. xxxv. 8.

I am the Way No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.—John xiv. 6.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths; where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—Jer. vi. 16.

THERE is a legend told by the ancient Greek and Roman churches of two youths who sought concealment in a lonely cave to escape the prevailing persecutions of the time. In this cave God caused them to fall into a death-like sleep. They slept two hundred years. When they woke they cautiously entered Ephesus, their native city, and enquired if there were any Christians there. "Christians!" was the answer, "we are all Christians!" But, alas, how were they disappointed to find that the offence of the cross had ceased. They found that the greater part who called themselves Christians were indifferent to Christ and His laws; they found that, as the world had become Christian, Christianity itself had become worldly. They found that with many the religion of Christ was only a name. They sought to escape from it, as they did from their persecution, and asked God to take them by death to their early friends in heaven.

Were the Protestant Reformers who have been asleep these many years, to awake and walk through the churches of the present day, would not they, like these two youths, inquire for the "old land marks" of Christian simplicity, spirituality, power, and unworldliness; and not finding them, request that they might go back to their graves in peace?

Has not the "offence of the Cross" almost ceased in these days? Has not courage in its resistance of the world given place to compromise? Do not Christians co-operate with the world more than with Christ? Where are the distinguishing marks that showed the difference between the world and the church in days of old?

O Lord, revive Thy work in the churches! Revive Thy work in me! Help me to walk in THE GOOD OLD WAY. Then shall I find "rest to my soul."

THE way the holy prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,
The King's highway of holiness,
I'll go, for all its paths are peace

December 23rd.

DO I find the yoke of Jesus to be easy, and His burden light?—

Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you. . . . For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.—Matt. xi. 28-30.

JESUS says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Strange words for those to hear who already are tired with wearing a yoke and burdened with carrying a burden! What is gained by exchanging one yoke for another, and one burden for another? This much; the yoke of Christ is "easy," and His burden "light"; whereas the yoke and burden of sin are galling and oppressive.

These words of Christ can only be verified by the "weary and heavy laden" coming to Him and learning of Him. Those who keep from Him and simply listen, with their burdens and weariness upon them, see no gain in the exchange. In fact, the worldling is heard to say, as he looks on those who wear Christ's yoke and carry His burden, "I would rather be as I am. I have more liberty and pleasure with my present experiences and circumstances than Christians have." This is like a reptile saying, as he sees an eagle soaring in the heavens, "What a burden that eagle's wings must be to it; I would rather be down here crawling in the dust than be burdened with its wings, flying in the air!" Yes, to it as a reptile the wings would be a burden, but converted into an eagle, they would be light, and flying easier than crawling.

My soul, such is not thy experience! Thou hast come to Christ as "weary and heavy laden," and made the blessed exchange of thy yoke and burden for His. And now I find that His service is perfect freedom: His commandments are not grievous, but joyous. Not as a reptile do I now creep in the dust, but mount up as on the wings of an eagle, "run, and am not weary, walk, and am not faint." Isa. xl. 31.

Jesus is the only rest to a weary soul. Away from Him it is like the dove until it came back to the ark. It is like a bee going from flower to flower. It is like Saul seeking his asses from place to place, but found them only at home. Coming to Jesus, and leaning our tired hearts on His bosom, we find repose.

Blessed Saviour, Thou art the everlasting rest of all Thy people.

"**C**OME unto Me, ye weary, and I will give you rest":
O blessed voice of Jesus, which comes to hearts oppress'd!
It tells of benediction, of pardon, grace, and peace,
Of joy that hath no ending, of love which cannot cease.

December 24th.

WHERE is my chief depository of the word of God as I hear and read it—in my head or in my heart?—

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.—Ps. cxix. 11.

That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.—Luke viii. 15.

THE word of God may be in the pulpit and in the pew, in the family and in the closet, in the ear, in the memory, and in the mouth; but if it is not sown in "an honest and good heart," it will not yield in the life "twenty, thirty, or sixty fold." It is there, and there only, that it sanctifies, enlightens, gives freedom, reproves, rebukes, corrects, makes wise unto salvation, and furnishes for every good work.

The heart is its legitimate place, as the earth is for seeds, plants, and trees. Wherever seeds are scattered, if not in the earth, they bring forth no fruit. God speaks His word *to* the heart, and *for* the heart. It has no force anywhere else.

May I then, as I hear or read His word, take it and hide it in my heart as precious seed, from which shall grow holy thoughts, pure affections, and noble intentions. Hide it from the treachery of a bad memory; hide it from the thefts of the world and Satan. Hide it as the incorruptible word which liveth and abideth for ever. Hide it so that I can find it any moment to bring it forth for edifying and useful purposes.

May the word of the Lord be in my heart as heavenly light, scattering my darkness of sin and ignorance of divine things: as a teacher in the way of life: as a power against my enemies. May its promises be in my heart as my comfort; its precepts as my guide; its examples as my models; its doctrines as my wisdom.

A Romish priest once took a Bible from a boy who was reading it, and burnt it, telling him he had no business with it. "Ah," said the lad, "you may take that from me, but you can't take from me the word of God which I have in my heart."

There is the advantage of hiding God's word in the heart. It abides when the Book itself may be taken from us and consumed to ashes.

O God, Who didst write the law on tables of stone, do Thou by Thy Spirit, write Thy word on the fleshly table of my heart. Sanctify me through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.

O MAY Thy precious word divine
Be hid within this heart of mine,
To keep me from the power of sin,
And make me wise and pure within.

HAS the purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God been accomplished in me?—

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.—1 John iii. 8.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same: that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.—Heb. ii. 14.

Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.—Matt. i. 21.

THE manifestation of the Son of God in human nature is the greatest mystery in the history of our world. Had that manifestation been for the display of Divine power and justice, in the punishment of mankind for its rebellion against His laws and authority, it could have been more easily understood, as in analogy with the manifestations of earthly sovereigns in their visitations of peoples that revolt against them. But this manifestation being one of love and tenderness, for the pardon of the rebel, is a mystery which confounds reason, and leads it to bow in adoring wonder at its feet.

“To destroy the works of the devil”; not to connive, to apologize, or to patronize them, but to DESTROY them. His works of error, delusion, slavery, impurity, selfishness. To destroy them in the world by destroying them in each individual. By the truth which He is, by the liberty that He gives, by the efficacy of His atoning blood, by the example of His life, He destroys these works, and brings in a reign of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Has the end of the manifestation of the Son of God been realized by me? Do I know the truth, and has the truth made *me* free? Is my heart purified from sin? Have I received Jesus in my love, as Simeon received Him in his arms—my salvation and my joy? Is He my Emmanuel? Is He my Jesus personally and experimentally? Can I testify that it is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief? If I cannot? Then the end of the Son's manifestation has not been accomplished in me. I am a failure.

Dear Redeemer, fulfil in me the purpose of Thine incarnate life, so that I also may fulfil in Thee the end for which I was born into the world.

GOD did in Christ Himself reveal,
To chase our darkness by His light,
Our sin and ignorance dispel,
Direct our wandering feet aright,
And bring our souls, with pardon blest,
To realms of everlasting rest.

December 26th.

WHAT is my present attitude as regards the second coming of the Lord Jesus?—

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.—Matt. xxv. 13.

We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus.—Phil. iii. 20.

Waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. i. 7.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—Titus ii. 13.

Unto you that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.—Heb. ix. 28.

SCARCELY any duty is so frequently enjoined in the New Testament as that of watching for the coming of Christ. But what is watching?

"I conceive," says J. H. Newman, "it may be explained as follows:—Do you know the feelings in matters of this life, of expecting a friend, expecting him to come, and he delays? Do you know what it is to be in unpleasant company, and to wish for the time to pass away, and the hour strike when you may be at liberty? Do you know what it is to be in anxiety lest something should happen which may happen or may not, or to be in suspense about some important event, which makes your heart beat when you are reminded of it, and of which you think the first thing in the morning? Do you know what it is to have a friend in a distant country, to expect news of him, and to wonder from day to day what he is now doing, and whether he is well? Do you know what it is so to live upon a person who is present with you, that your eyes follow his, that you read his soul, that you see all its changes in his countenance, that you anticipate his wishes, that you smile in his smile, and are sad in his sadness, and are downcast when he is vexed, and rejoice in his successes? To watch for Christ is a feeling such as all these; as far as feelings of this world are fit to shadow out those of another.

"He watches for Christ who has a sensitive, eager, apprehensive mind; who is awake, alive, quick-sighted, jealous in seeking and honouring Him; who looks out for Him in all that happens, and who would not be surprised, who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed, if he found that He was coming at once."

May I watch for Christ so as to find Him in everything and everywhere, that when He come in death or judgment, or in any other form, I shall say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

BEAR us aloft, more glad, more strong, on Thy celestial wing,
And grant us grace to look and long for our returning King.
He draweth near, He standeth by, He fills our eyes, our ears;
Come, King of grace, Thy people cry, and bring the glorious years.

December 27th.

WHAT is my belief as to the grace of the Lord Jesus, that it comes to me directly from Himself, or that it is deposited in the church, and conveyed to me through its ministers?—

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.—Heb. iv. 16.

God is able to make all grace abound toward you.—2 Cor. ix. 8.

He giveth more grace.—Jas. iv. 6.

I WANT neither “church,” nor “minister,” to come between me and Jesus. As Diogenes said to Alexander when he asked him what he could do for him, “Stand aside, and let me see the light of the sun,” so I say to all who come between me and my Lord, “Stand aside, and let me see Jesus only.” Who is that man, or what is that church which will presume to impose itself upon my attention in the place of Him Who is Head of the Church, and the Great High Priest of my profession?

If I have Christ as my Prophet, Priest, and King; if He is made to me of God, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;” if He is in me the “hope of glory;” if He “saves me to the uttermost;” if He is my strength, my life, my joy, my peace; if He is my “All in All;” if He, by His Spirit, teaches me “all things,” and guides me into “all truth,” and strengthens me with might in the inner man, what can a minister or a church do more? Does either or both contain grace that is more essential than what is in Jesus? Has He deposited in them some mystical power which can be exercised only through their sacred orders? If so, He has said nothing about it in His word. I find that Jesus does all things completely in and of Himself. He pardons *all* mine iniquities. He cleanses me from *all* unrighteousness. He *satisfies* my longing soul. He begins, continues, and finishes my salvation. What then do I need with grace in ministers or churches? It is an impertinence. Prophets, teachers, ordinances, and such-like, *contain* no grace to give to me. They are nothing more than other means and agents which God may use for the “perfecting of His saints;” as a gardener cannot give sunshine and showers, but only be an agent to prepare his garden to receive them.

Head of the Church, forbid that I should be drawn aside from Thee the “Fountain of life,” to trust in “broken cisterns that hold no water.”

O THAT I might now decrease! O, that all I am might cease!

Let me into nothing fall, let my Lord be all in all!

Nothing less will I require, nothing more can I desire;

None but Christ to me be given! none but Christ in earth or heaven.

HAVE I passed through that great spiritual change which makes every one that has, as a little child in spirit and disposition?—

And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. xviii. 2.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again anew (from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God.—John iii. 3.

MAN naturally is vain, self-righteous, self-seeking: and, therefore, unlike the character of the kingdom of God and those who are subjects in it. But a little child is innocent, humble, happy, living free from anxious care, and trustful of its parents in all things.

Here, then, are two characters, one the opposite of the other. The question is not how can the *child* go into the kingdom of God? “for of such *is* the kingdom of God”; but how can *man* go in? As he is, he *cannot*. He must go in as a child. But how can a man become a child? This was the question that confounded Nicodemus. It is the question that now confounds human reason in all its exercises. Jesus alone can answer it;—“Except ye be converted”—turned, changed, born again of the Spirit of God; and in this way become as a “little child,” ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.” “That is,” says Trapp, “of the Holy Ghost working like water, cooling, cleansing, etc. In allusion, belike, to the first washing of a new-born babe (Ex. xvi. 4).”

This is the Divine method of giving man the moral and spiritual attributes of a child by which he is made a subject of the kingdom of God.

It is a hard saying: who can hear it? Hard as it is, may I look within to see whether this change has taken place in me. If I am not “born again of the Spirit,” “baptism” is nothing, “confirmation” is nothing, “holy communion” is nothing. A new creation in Christ Jesus is the essential meetness for a place in the kingdom of God. Have I this meetness?

O Lord, if I have not, I beseech Thee to grant that I may be willing to submit to Thy way of making me a subject of Thy kingdom of grace and glory!

O THAT I, as a little child,
May follow Thee, and never rest
Till sweetly Thou hast breathed Thy mild
And lowly mind into my breast!
Nor ever may we parted be
Till I become one spirit with Thee.

DOES my religion make me happy under severe affliction?—

Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord.—Ps. xciv. 12.

Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.—Job v. 17.

Behold, we count them happy which endure.—Jas. v. 11.

IF my religion does not make me happy under extraordinary affliction, it is seriously defective, and I should, at once, find out wherein it is so. Religion, full of Christ, never fails to give happiness to the poor or to the rich, in the cottage or in the palace. When all things are taken from us, or we have to leave them, happiness abides as our portion for ever.

The late Dr. Arnold writes of a saintly sister the following words: "Through disease she was confined to a crib for TWENTY YEARS." Think of it, "twenty" long years; "and never once could she change her posture for all that time. And yet I never saw a more perfect instance of the spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind. Intense love, almost to the annihilation of selfishness; a daily martyrdom for twenty years, during which she adhered to her early-formed resolution of never talking about herself: thoughtful about the very pins and ribbons of my wife's dress, about the making of a doll's cap for a child—but of herself, save as regarded her improving of all goodness, wholly thoughtless; enjoying everything lovely, graceful, beautiful, high-minded, whether in God's works or man's, with keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fulness of the promise; and preserved through the very valley of the shadow of death from all fear or impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's Spirit's glorious work. May God grant that I might come but within one hundred degrees of her place in glory!"

I know not through what personal or family trials I may have to pass; but this I pray, that I might have such a patient, meek, long suffering, and joyous spirit as that "saintly sister!" How many of God's noblest, bravest, and heavenliest children are "chosen in affliction!" Rather than not be one of His "chosen," it were better to become such even though the furnace were heated seven times hotter than it were wont to be.

O Thou Who wast "made perfect through suffering," make me like Thyself by any means that shall please Thee.

IN wealth or poverty, in sorrow or in joy,
I will Thy pleasure see, and on Thy word rely;
To live or die, I will, if such *Thy* will it be,
And anything I have or feel, I give up, Lord, to Thee.

December 30th.

DO I feel, as days and years pass away, the need of a deeper awakening to the realities of the future life towards which I am so fast hastening?—

And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is your salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.—Rom. xiii. 11, 12.

HOW differently the future looks to buoyant youth to what it does to old age. The Rev. A. Barnes, of Philadelphia, describes it thus in a sermon which he preached when at three-score:—"The earth, as it moves in its orbit from year to year, maintains its distance of ninety-five millions of miles from the sun; and the sun, except when seen through a hazy atmosphere, at its rising or its setting, seems at all times to be of the same magnitude—to human view an object always small, as compared with our own world. But suppose the earth should leave its orbit, and make its way in a direct line towards the sun. How soon would the sun seem to enlarge its dimensions! How vast and bright would it become! How soon would it fill the whole field of vision, and all on the earth dwindle to nothing! So human life now appears to me. In earlier years, eternity appeared distant and small in importance. But at the period of life which I have now reached, it seems to me as if the earth had left the orbit of its annual movement, and were making a rapid and direct flight to the sun. The objects of eternity, towards which I am moving, rapidly enlarge themselves. They have become overpoweringly bright and grand. They fill the whole field of vision, and the earth, with all which is the common object of human ambition and pursuit, is vanishing away!"

When the venerable Mead was once asked how he was, he answered, leaning upon his staff, in a cheerful voice, "Why, going home as fast as I can, as every honest man ought to do when his day's work is done; and I bless God, I have a good home to go to."

O God of my youth, Thou wilt not forsake me now "I am old and grey-headed." "Even to hoar hairs" Thou hast promised to carry me; nor wilt Thou lay me down until Thou lay me in "Abraham's bosom."

I N age and feebleness extreme
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
Jesus! my only Hope Thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart,
O could I catch one smile from Thee,
And drop into eternity!

December 31st.

ON *this, the last day of the year, am I more like Christ than I was on the first day, and am I more prepared for the day of the Lord when it shall come?—*

Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and of the day; we are not of night, nor of darkness.—1 Thes. v. 2, 4, 5.

AS I reflect on the year now closing, I see nothing but goodness and mercy in the dispensations of God towards me. He has been true and faithful to all His promises. He has “crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercies.”

During the year I have had 365 *days* of mercies. I have had 8,760 *hours* of mercies. I have had more than half a million of *minutes* of mercies.

As I review the year I see nothing to boast of. My prayers, how poor! My praises, how brief! My works, how few and imperfect! My faith, how small! How many times I have fallen! How frequently I have forgotten God! How much of my time has been spent, as an old writer expresses, “in dressing and trimming; so many in idle visitings; so many in gaming and pleasure taking; so many in the play-house; so many in the tavern; so many in vain chat; so many in unprofitable reading.

“Let us, therefore, in the fear of God, be exhorted to recollect ourselves; and since we find ourselves guilty of the sinful mispense of our good hours, let us, while we have space, obtain of ourselves to be careful of redeeming that precious time we have lost. As the widow of Sarepta, when she had but a little oil left in her cruse, and a little meal in her barrel, was careful of spending that to the best advantage; so let us, considering that we have but a little sand left in our glass, a short remainder of our mortal life, be sure to employ it unto the best profit of our souls; so as every of our hours may carry up with it a happy testimony of our gainful improvement, that so, when our day cometh, we may change our time for eternity—the time of our sojourning for the eternity of glory and blessedness.”

O Thou Who art from everlasting to everlasting, the Just and Holy, yet the Infinitely Merciful, grant that when my final hour shall come, no pains of death may fall from Thee!

WHEN all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Conclusion.

Bishop Hall, author of the "Contemplations," preached his last sermon at Higham, near Norwich, on Sunday, July 1st, 1655, from which the following is taken, as appropriate to the close of the year:—

"It is a true observation of Seneca: 'Velocitas temporis,' saith he, 'This quick speed of time is best discerned when we look at it past and gone'; and this I can confirm to you by experience. It hath pleased the providence of my God so to contrive it that this day, fourscore years ago, I was born into the world. 'A great time since,' ye are ready to say, and so, indeed, it seems to you that look at it forward; but to me, that look at it as past, it seems so short that it is gone like a tale that is told, or a dream by night, and looks but like yesterday.

"It can be no offence for me to say that many of you who hear me this day are not like to see so many suns walk over your heads as I have done. Yea, what speak I of this? There is not one of us that can assure himself of his continuance here one day. We are all tenants at will, and, for aught we know, may be turned out of these clay cottages at an hour's warning. Oh, then, what should we do, but, as wise farmers, who know the time of their lease is expiring, and cannot be renewed, carefully and seasonably provide ourselves of a surer and more during tenure?

"I remember our witty countryman Bromiard tells us of a lord in his time that had a fool in his house, as many great men in those days had for their pleasure, to whom this lord gave a staff, and charged him to keep it until he should meet with one that was more fool than himself, and, if he met such a one, to deliver it over to him. Not many years after, this lord fell sick, and indeed was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and was told by his sick lord that he must now shortly leave him. 'And whither wilt thou go?' said the fool. 'Into another world,' said his lord. 'And when wilt thou come again? within a month?' 'No.' 'Within a year?' 'No.' 'When then?' 'Never.' 'Never? and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there, whither thou goest?' 'None at all.' 'No!' said the fool; 'none at all? Here, take my staff. Art thou going away for ever, and hast taken no order nor care how thou shalt speed in that other world whence thou shalt never return? Take my staff; for I am not guilty of any such folly as this.'"

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."—Luke xii. 21.

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